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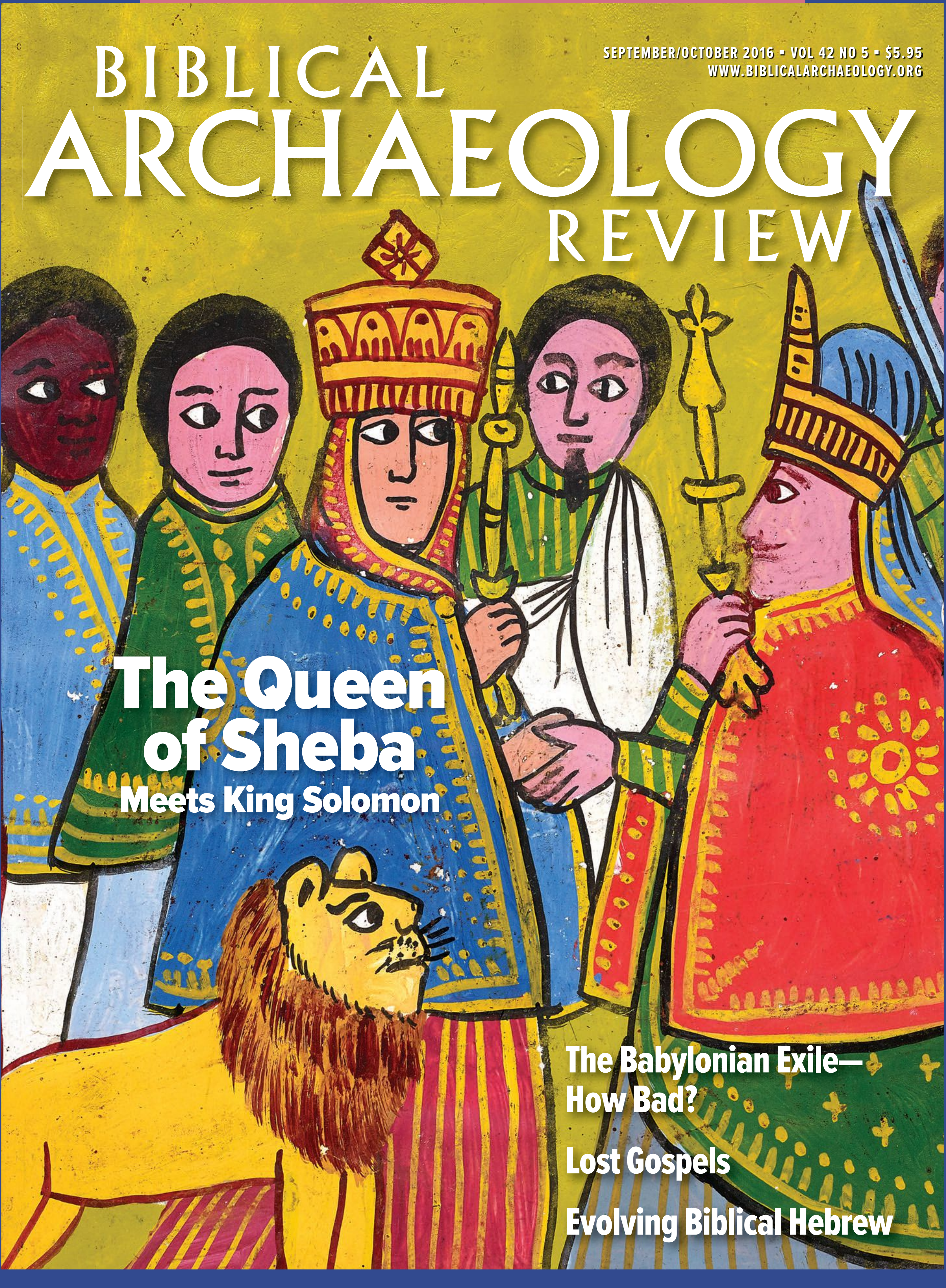

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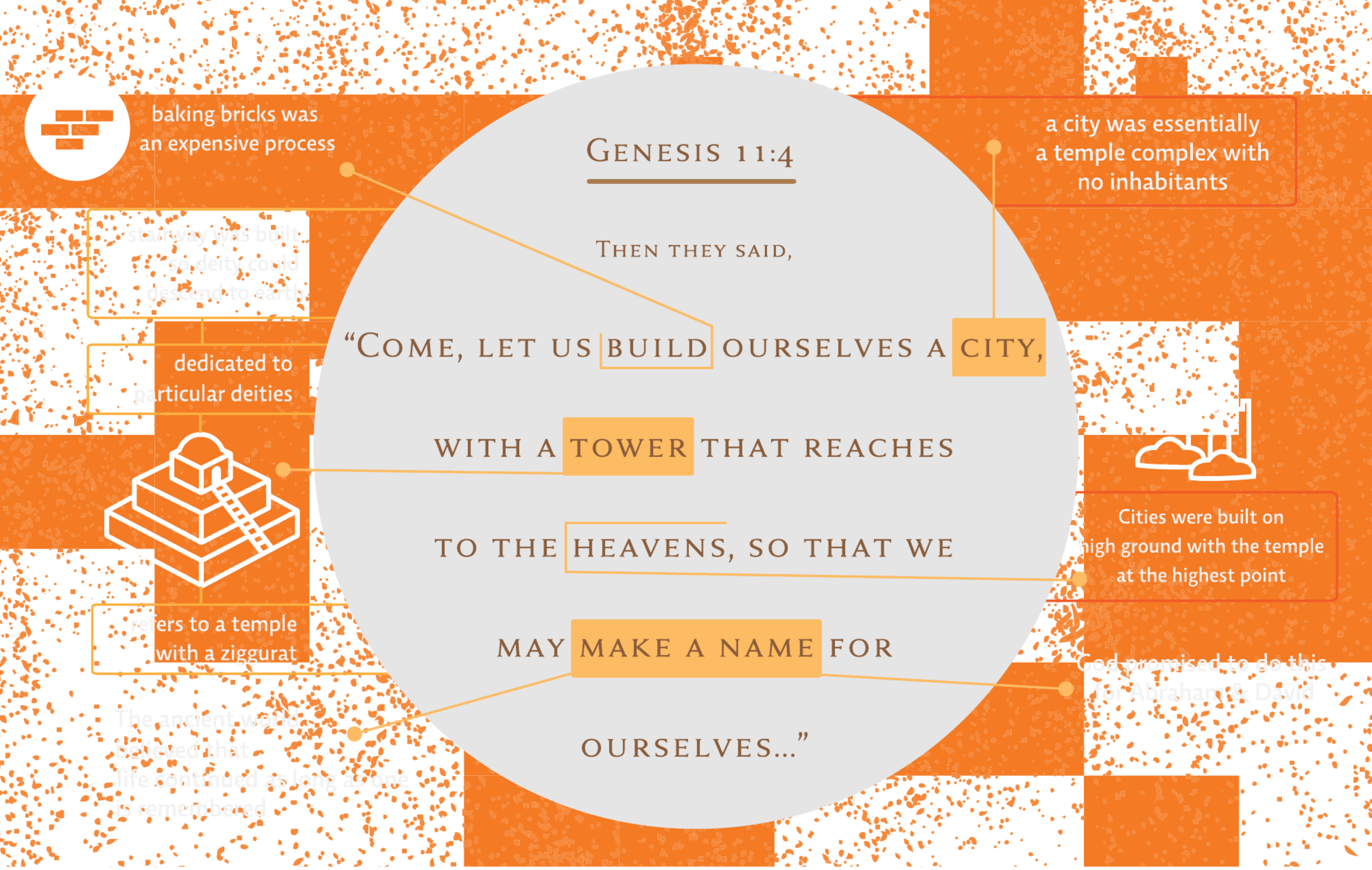
baking bricks was an expensive process
stairway was built so deity could descend to earth
dedicated to particular deities
refers to a temple with a ziggurat
The ancient world believed that life continued as long as one is remembered
a city was essentially a temple complex with no inhabitants
Cities were built on high ground with the temple at the highest point
God promised to do this for Abraham & David

GENESIS 11:4

THEN THEY SAID,

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WITH A TOWER THAT REACHES
TO THE HEAVENS, SO THAT WE
MAY MAKE A NAME FOR
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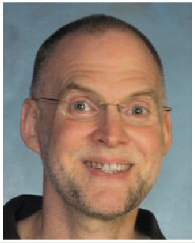

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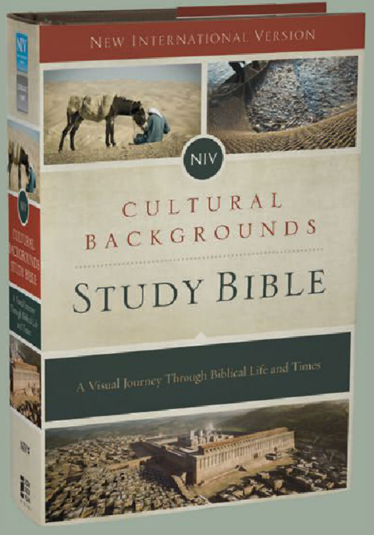
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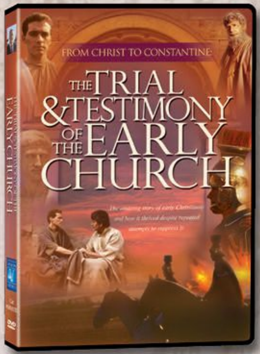
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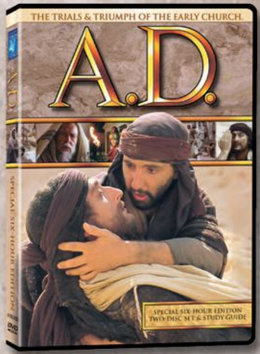
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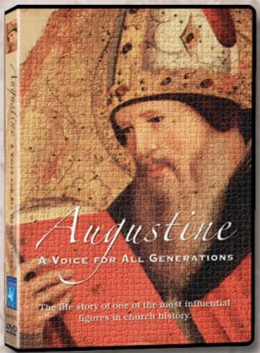
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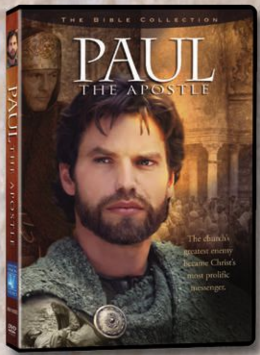
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Bar Kribus

The meeting of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba is described in the Bible. Bringing exquisite gifts, the Queen of Sheba came from an exotic land—but where exactly? Ethiopians claim the Queen of Sheba as part of their heritage, but archaeological and historical sources document a Kingdom of Saba (Sheba) during Biblical times in modern-day Yemen. Who has the rightful claim to the Queen of Sheba?

37 How Biblical Hebrew Changed

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Did the language of the Bible—Biblical Hebrew—evolve over time? Professor Avi Hurvitz argues there are three distinct forms of Biblical Hebrew, each one corresponding to certain parts of the Bible and other ancient texts.

41 "Lost Gospels"—Lost No More

Tony Burke

The apocryphal gospels didn't make the cut. But were they truly rejected, suppressed and destroyed? Until recent times there was no doubt. But now this "truth" may be unraveling. Many early Christians may have regarded these apocryphal texts as sacred.

48 How Bad Was the Babylonian Exile?

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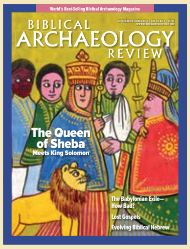
Was there really weeping from the Judahite exiles by the rivers of Babylon? New evidence suggests that life was actually pretty good for some Judahite deportees and their successors.



ON THE COVER: This illuminated page from the 19th-century manuscript *The History of the Queen of Sheba* depicts the meeting of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

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ON THE WEB

The Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela

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The article "Where Is the Land of Sheba—Arabia or Africa?" by Bar Kribus pictures one of Ethiopia's famous subterranean churches at the pilgrimage site of Lalibela. Explore more of Lalibela's spectacular churches in a web-exclusive slideshow in *Bible History Daily*.

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Christmas Stories in Christian Apocrypha

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Apocryphal gospels are at the center of Tony Burke's article "'Lost Gospels'—Lost No More" in this issue. Learn about the texts that inspired the modern Christmas nativity scene in a *Bible History Daily* guest blog post by Burke.

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BAR IS GIVING $50,000 IN GRANTS TO PROfessional archaeological excavations in Israel. How that came to be has got to be one of the strangest stories in archaeological history.

It all began with a dear friend, the world's leading expert on archaeology related to Herod the Great, king of Judea. For 35 years Ehud Netzer of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem had been searching for Herod's tomb. We know where Herod was buried; the Jewish historian Josephus tells us: Herodium. But where at Herodium? Finally, Ehud found a mausoleum on the side of Herodium that contained several sarcophagi. Ehud thought this mausoleum was Herod's tomb and that one of the sarcophagi belonged to him. Then tragedy struck. A wooden railing at Herodium against which Ehud leaned gave way, and he fell to his death.*

A number of prominent archaeologists doubted that this mausoleum had belonged to King Herod. And they seemed convincing to me. One theory is that Herod was in fact interred not on the side of the mountain but in a large tower at the site. Although the tower appears to be solid, there is a possibility that it contains, or did contain, cavities or chambers.**

When **BAR** reader Wayne Shepard of Florida sent me a check for $20,000 to test the theory, I decided that **BAR** would add $5,000 to the pot. Ehud Netzer had long been assisted in managing the dig at Herodium by one of his doctoral students, Roi Porat. My plan to explore the inside of the tower was presented on **BAR**'s behalf to Porat by Danny Herman, one of Israel's leading tour guides and an instructor in the Hebrew University's summer archaeology programs. Danny reported to me Porat's reaction to **BAR**'s proposal. It was refused on two grounds: (1) Porat wanted absolute control over the funds; the money should be disbursed simply on his request; and (2) Porat did not want the money to be funded by **BAR** because if we did find Herod's tomb, **BAR** would "sensationalize" the discovery. So the **BAR** grant was refused.***

At this point I decided that **BAR** would accept applications for the funds. We placed a notice in **BAR**, and we received numerous applications from some wonderful archaeologists. In the end we decided that we would split the $25,000 pot among three excavations: (1) $10,000 for Abel Beth Maacah in northern Galilee, an excavation led by Hebrew University's Nava Panitz-Cohen and Robert Mullins of Azusa Pacific University; (2) $10,000 for el-Araj on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee led by Steven Notley of Nyack College and Mordechai Aviam of Kinneret College in Israel; and (3) $5,000 for 'Einot Amitai in the Galilee led by Yonatan Adler of Ariel University.

For many years, Nava Panitz-Cohen had been Amihai Mazar's chief assistant at the important excavation at Tel Rehov, which was financed by the best-selling novelist John Sandford, whose real name is John Camp. He had not helped finance Abel Beth Maacah, however. So I called John and told him **BAR** would make a $10,000 grant to Nava if he would make a matching grant. He instantly agreed and sent me his check the next day.

Next I called Steven Notley and Yonatan Adler and told them that they would get a $10,000 and a $5,000 grant, respectively, if they could raise a matching grant. To make a long story short, each was successful. We are delighted to be able to report two grants of $20,000 and one grant of $10,000.

If you're up for it, let me tell you a little about each of these excavations and the people involved.

Abel Beth Maacah is located 4.5 miles west of Tel Dan and lies close to Israel's borders with both Lebanon and Syria. It was first surveyed in 1973 by William G. Dever, who suggested the site was occupied from the Early Bronze Age through the Iron Age. Abel Beth Maacah is mentioned in the Bible three times (2 Samuel 20:14, 1 Kings 15:20 and 2 Kings 15:29), the first of which involved David's general Joab besieging Abel Beth Maacah to capture Sheba, son

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*Ehud Netzer, "In Search of Herod's Tomb," **BAR**, January/February 2011; Milestones: "Ehud Netzer," **BAR**, January/February 2011.

Hershel Shanks, "Was Herod's Tomb Really Found?" **BAR, May/June 2014.

***Queries and Comments: "Fund-raising for Finding Herod's Tomb," **BAR**, September/October 2014; Hershel Shanks, First Person: "What Should We Do with $25,000?" **BAR**, May/June 2015.

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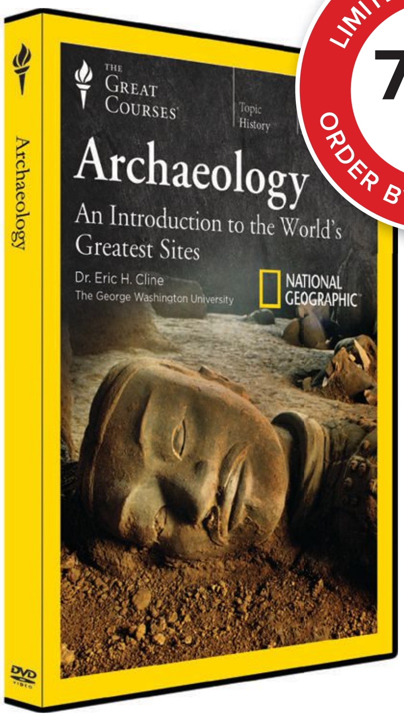

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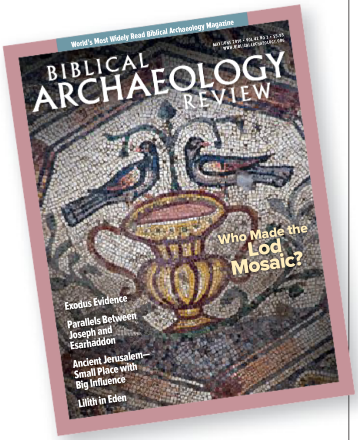

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JOSEPH AND ESARHADDON—CONNECTIONS?

Not Convinced Tales Are "Parallel"

I am a new and avid reader of **BAR**. My background is in story and writing, and I study folktale and literary theory, which is why I really enjoyed Eckart Frahm's article, "Surprising Parallels Between Joseph and King Esarhaddon" (May/June 2016). But I'm not yet convinced (though I could be) that the parallels suggest that one story came from the other.

At present, I agree more with the author's statement that "[o]ne could argue they reflect little else than the universal nature of the theme of fraternal rivalry."

JOHN MCGEARY, M.F.A.
PITTSBURGH, PA

Too Many "Maybes"

In the May/June issue Eckart Frahm makes some interesting parallels between Joseph and Esarhaddon, except for:

1. Jacob, his sons and the rest of his family didn't move to Egypt until *after* the sons went to Egypt to get grain for a starving family back in Canaan. In fact, he resisted going there all during the many times the brothers were going back and forth. Finally, when Joseph revealed his true identity, Jacob agreed to take the family to the land of Goshen (the northeast corner of Egypt).
2. Jacob didn't work for Laban for 20 years to get Rachel as his wife, only 14.
3. Joseph did die in Egypt, a natural death, but Frahm gives us no proof that Esarhaddon died there, only that he died in a campaign *to* Egypt. It's a long way from Assyria to Egypt.

The two full paragraphs on page 49 may be excluded in their entirety from the discussion. They include: "there is no proof," "suggest," "remains unclear," "may have," "seems to have been," "can easily imagine," "probably" and finally a "seem to have been." Let me be clear about this. There is no objection to attempting to put together "what really happened" from *known* facts, but I do have an objection to excogitation from a series of "maybes" and "probables."

J. BIRNEY DIBBLE, M.D.
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN

Prof. Greenstein Sees Common Fugitive Hero Story Pattern

In his article, distinguished Assyriologist Professor Eckart Frahm compares the Biblical narrative of Joseph to the autobiographical accounts of Assyrian King Esarhaddon, a younger son and successor of Sennacherib, who reigned from 680 to 669 B.C.E. Finding a number of points in common—particularly that of sibling hatred—Frahm suggests "that the author(s) of the Joseph story borrowed a number of key motifs from the story of Esarhaddon's rise to power." This suggestion entails a relatively late date for the Joseph story.

Biblical scholars have been comparing the pattern of the story of Esarhaddon to Biblical narratives for decades. I recently published a study (in John J. Collins, T.M. Lemos and Saul M. Olyan, eds., *Worship, Women, and War: Essays in Honor of Susan Niditch*, Brown Judaic Studies 357 [Providence, RI: Brown University, 2015]) delineating a widespread ancient Near Eastern and Biblical narrative pattern, using 14 points of comparison, in which a leader or leading figure must flee, or be removed, from home; spends a period of time in exile; returns home in triumph at the prompting of a god(dess); and establishes or renews a cult(ic practice). In most cases the hero is a younger son. This "fugitive hero pattern," as I call it, is first attested in the Egyptian story of Sinuhe (c. 1900 B.C.E.); it lies behind the story of King Idrimi from northern Syria (c. 1450); it occurs in the Hittite narrative of King Hattushili III (c. 1275), who, like Joseph, was removed and did not flee of his own accord; and, in the first millennium B.C.E., it is found in the stories of Esarhaddon and of the Babylonian king Nabonidus. Among the Biblical stories that conform to the pattern are Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David—and several others in part.

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New Book
from
Modern Essene Community

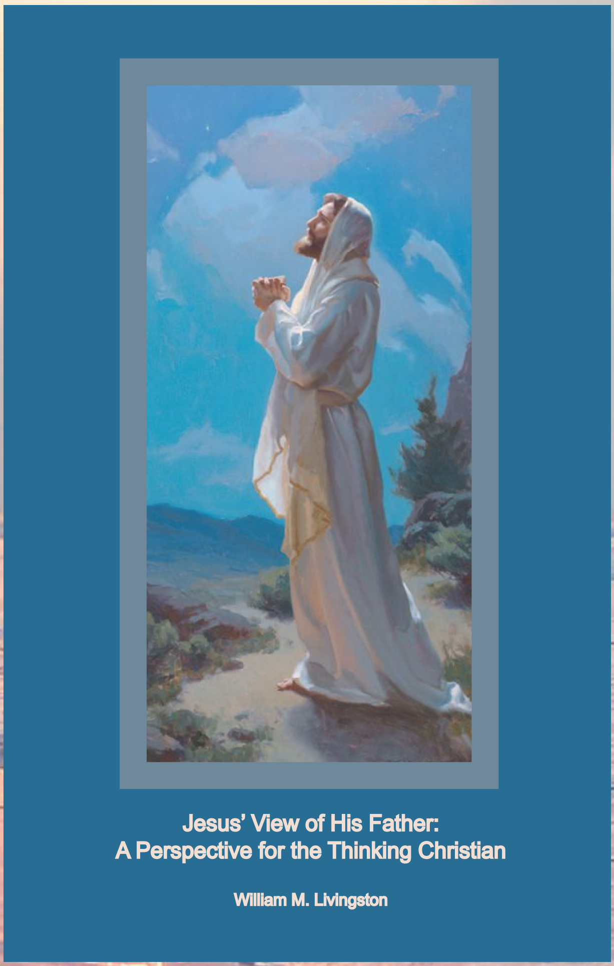
As we enter into a period of history where in many parts of the world a Christian genocide is underway, it becomes expedient that people address their need for spiritual empowerment. In John 14:12, Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."* The members of the early church often fulfilled this expectation of Jesus. However, Christians soon lost the ability to give sight to the blind, heal the withered hands, and raise the dead.

It is the author's position that those spiritual powers can be restored if people will examine Jesus' view of His Father and His personal definition of salvation. How did Jesus actually view His Father? What does that view have to say to us today? How did Jesus define salvation in His own words? And what effect did modifying that definition during the Gentile Mission have on the empowerment of the saints?

This study uses the King James Bible as its primary source material as well as support from the Book of Enoch, Jubilees, and others. This penetrating study has considerable ramifications for readers today as Elder Livingston examines the origins of Judaism and Western Christianity and traces their gradual shifts and developments through the lens of Jesus' View of His Father. It is a current expression of the Essene view of the Creatorship of Jesus, which topic is entirely undeveloped in Christianity.

Historically, the Essene sect has been private in its teachings and scriptural knowledge. We have been a functioning Essene community for nearly 30 years and have followed this pattern of privacy until now, so this text is a work that provides a unique perspective and opportunity to today's faithful. We have authorized the author to make public these aspects of Essene theology and world view.

The Council of the Community
Brotherhood of Christ Church



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A Perspective for the Thinking Christian

William M. Livingston

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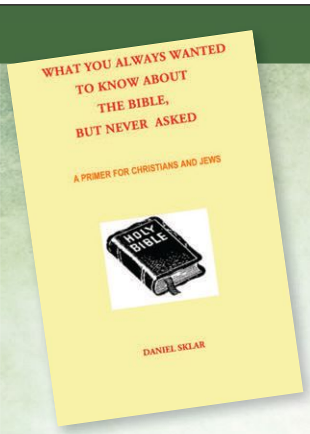

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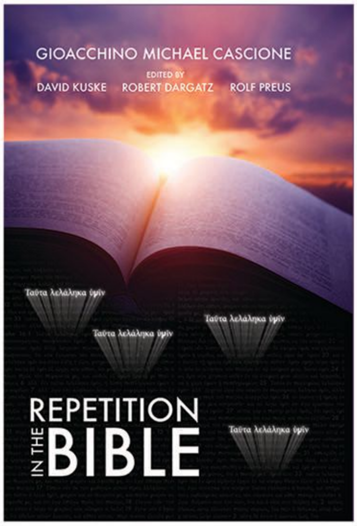
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In one of the optional sequences in the pattern, the hero marries the daughter of his host abroad. This occurs in the stories of Jacob, Moses, David and—with a variation—Joseph (he marries the daughter of Potiphera, whose name is nearly identical to that of his Egyptian master Potiphar, whose wife tries to seduce Joseph), as well as in the stories of Sinuhe and Hattushili (with a variation). It does not occur in either of the later Mesopotamian narratives—those of Esarhaddon and Nabonidus. It is therefore very improbable that the contours of the Joseph story were borrowed from Esarhaddon's, which lacks the typical sequence of marrying the host's daughter. Most of the similarities between the narratives of Joseph and Esarhaddon are explained by their construction according to the fugitive hero pattern. My analysis suggests that this narrative pattern originated in the Levant and reached Mesopotamia, probably by way of Aram, to which both Esarhaddon and Nabonidus were connected.

ED GREENSTEIN
PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY
RAMAT-GAN, ISRAEL

Professor Porten Questions Use of Image

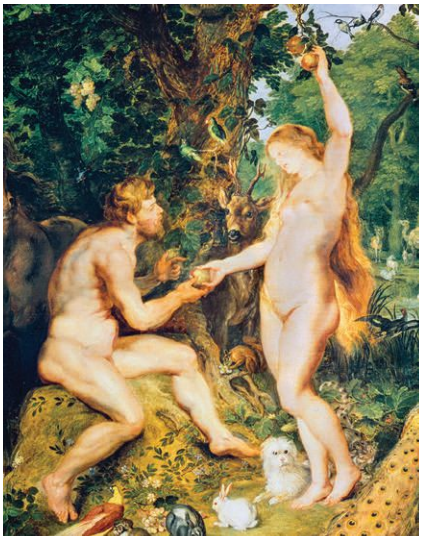
It's indeed a mystery where Eckart Frahm ("Surprising Parallels Between Joseph and King Esarhaddon") turned up the nice Aramaic fragment on page 49 of his article. It has nothing to do with Aḥiqar. It is the left edge of a letter fragment and was published by E. Sachau and may be found in Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt—volume 4: Ostraca and Assorted Inscriptions*, page 18 bottom. Were I to venture a guess why it was cited for Aḥiqar, I would say because line 1 reads, as an opening epistolary blessing, "[May the gods seek after] the welfare of my brother at all [times]." The letters of "my brother" are the same as the first three letters of the name Aḥiqar, namely *aleph, ḥet, yod.*

BEZALEL PORTEN
PROFESSOR EMERITUS
DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH HISTORY
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

BAR: OPINIONS DIVERGE

BAR Issue Withheld from Prisoner

Greetings. I had for some time wondered why I missed the January/February 2016 issue of **BAR**. It was withheld because on page 42 there is an image that is "sexually explicit" and contains "frontal nudity." I'm clueless to what appeared on page 42. But I know from multiple past issues that it couldn't have been anywhere near to the term of "purposeful eroticism" and hence contraband.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TAKEN FROM A PAINTING of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625).

ERIC MANFREDI
SIERRA CONSERVATION CENTER
JAMESTOWN, CALIFORNIA

You're right.—**Ed.**

BAR Back Issues Wreaking Havoc

I write with some annoyance, perhaps even anger, because I have purchased the DVD of your back issues. My anger is because I was not warned that this DVD was addictive. When I get medicine, the box is covered with all kinds of warnings, but you did not put a single warning on this DVD. My apartment has become much dirtier, my sink became

CONTINUES ON PAGE 66

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STRATA

Child's Eagle Eyes Spy Egyptian Amulet

COURTESY TEMPLE MOUNT SIFTING PROJECT

Four years ago, eight-year-old Neshama Spielman participated with her family in the Temple Mount Sifting Project in Jerusalem's Emek Tzurim National Park. The Sifting Project, which sifts and analyzes the dirt illicitly removed from the Temple Mount by the Waqf in 1999, welcomes volunteers of all ages and from all around the world.[1]

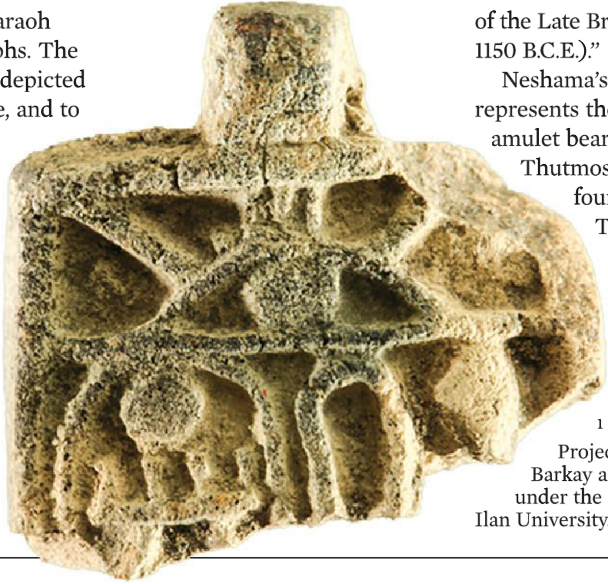
Neshama found a rare amulet bearing the name of Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III!

The partially preserved amulet (its bottom is missing) is shaped like a pendant and measures less than an inch wide and a quarter of an inch thick. Made of clay, the pendant has a hole at the top where a string could be inserted to make a necklace. The front side of the pendant displays the cartouche of Thutmose III. A cartouche is an oval frame that encircles the name of the pharaoh written in hieroglyphs. The symbol of an eye is depicted above the cartouche, and to the right of the cartouche is the symbol of a cobra.

The sixth pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty in the New Kingdom of Egypt, Thutmose III reigned from c. 1479 to 1425 B.C.E. Through his military campaigns in the Near East, Thutmose III brought Canaan under Egyptian rule. The Egyptian pharaoh boasted of his conquests, including a decisive victory at Megiddo, on the walls of the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Egypt's authority over Canaan lasted for the next 200 years, which may explain why the amulet with the cartouche of Thutmose III was found in Jerusalem.

"The amulet may have been buried in earth brought to the Temple Mount to be used as fill for the expansion of the Mount in [the] Second Temple period," said Sifting Project leader Zachi Dvira. "This earth probably originated in the slopes of the Kidron Valley near the Temple Mount, an area that contained tombs of the Late Bronze Age (1550–1150 B.C.E.)."

Neshama's discovery represents the first time an amulet bearing the name of Thutmose III has been found in Jerusalem. The amulet is identical to one found in 1978 at Nahal Iron, a site in northern Israel.



COURTESY TEMPLE MOUNT SIFTING PROJECT

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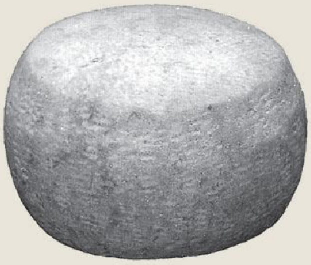
[1] The Sifting Project is led by Gabriel Barkay and Zachi Dvira under the auspices of Bar-Ilan University.

WHAT IS IT?



JEWISH QUARTER EXCAVATIONS

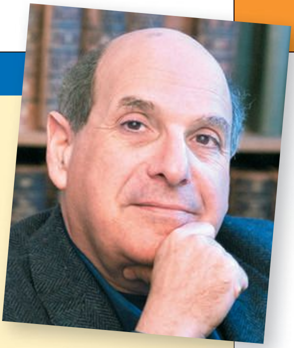
- **A Grinding stone**
- **B Wheelbarrow wheel**
- **C Hockey puck**
- **D Scale weight**
- **E Petrified doughnut**

ANSWER ON P. 58

THE BIBLE IN THE NEWS

From the Mouth of Animals

Leonard J. Greenspoon



I try to dish out ample portions of Biblical knowledge to my students. In addition, I like to provide some side dishes containing bits (or bites) of popular culture. Even better, I try to combine the two.

Over the past couple of years, I've been working assiduously to acquaint the younger generation with one of my favorite '60s sitcoms: *Mister Ed*, the talking horse. Let's consider the connection between Mr. Ed and two Biblical characters: Balaam's ass (or, if you insist, donkey) of Numbers 22 and the demonic serpent of Genesis 3.

Alas, I cannot take credit for being the first to make such a comparison. Rather, that honor may go to Victoria Coren Mitchell's televised game show, *Only Connect*. According to the *South Wales Evening Post*, in the series "teams compete [at] finding connections between seemingly unrelated clues." Among the "series of eclectic clues," this one makes the honor roll: "Donkey, Xanthus, Balaam's ass and Mister Ed." Really, how hard can it be to connect these? Why, anybody knowledgeable in popular culture, Classical mythology and Biblical studies should be able to figure this one out!

It might help if the contestants had a scintillating summary of the Biblical story, which in this case is provided by what I would call an unlikely source, the *Economic Times* (what do Balaam and his ass have to do with GNP or trade imbalances?): "Balaam's ass saves the life of its irascible master in the Bible three times in a row, even at the cost of a beating. After the third time, however, God opens the mouth of Balaam's ass, which enables the animal to talk back to its master. Yet, the pigheaded man (no offence to the porcine family) continues his calamitous course, raising the question: Who is the real ass, the steed or the rider, who fails to heed the miracle of the talking ass!"

Are there any famous asses other than Balaam's? Accounts like this one (from London's *Independent*)—"Balaam's ass, who starved to death because he couldn't decide whether to eat the hay on the right or the hay on the left"—are invariably followed by corrigenda like this (from the *Guardian*): In an earlier issue, "we described Balaam's ass as the ass that starved to death because it could not choose which of two equidistant bales of hay to eat. We were confusing our asses. We should have referred to Buridan's ass, from the French philosopher Jean Buridan, who used the allegory to illustrate a particular kind of moral choice."

According to the *Irish Times*, Balaam's ass is one of "only seven animals in heaven, there to greet you among the seraphim and cherubim." Among others is "the dog that once belonged to Tobit, the pious Egyptian Jew of the Apocrypha." This is surely a heaven where my dogs reside (or will reside), whether or not I, as their human companion, am granted admittance.

Let us move forward (or backward?) from the asinine to the serpentine. Those looking for a lively account of the Biblical story could do far worse than consulting this abbreviated narrative from the *Santa Fe New Mexican*: "So Adam and Eve (or Edán y Eva, if you're speaking Spanish) were hanging out in the Garden of Eden in olden days when this serpent guy showed up to tempt them with juicy apples. ... Eve initially fell prey to the serpent's seductive ways (after all, ladies first), but then Adam, gullible dope that he was, followed suit, which is kind of funny because they didn't wear suits back then."

After that, the popular press goes into a multitude of metaphors (or other figures of speech). Let us look first at the instrument of seduction. "In our society," so we learn from the *Daily Mail* (in an article indelicately titled "Why Every Woman LOVES a Fat Friend"), "transformation is the holy grail—but it's also deeply threatening. ... This one goes back a long way—back to the Garden of Eden, when the serpent as good as whispered to Eve: 'Here, take the apple. Only 80 calories and absolutely zero carbs.' The rest of humanity has paid the price in trips to WeightWatchers ever since." Okay, so we all know it REALLY wasn't an apple. But why should we let that bit of knowledge get in the way of a good story?

And then something more about the seducer, as recalled by a writer for the *Financial Post* of Canada: "Monday while watching the TV listings, I misread Space Channel's *Sand Serpents* as *Sad Serpents*. *Sad Serpents* is a reality program I'd be much more inclined to watch. I'm imagining a Claymation Garden of Eden serpent addressing the camera: 'Sometimes I miss my legs. I still dream I have them, and when I wake up, it takes a minute to acclimate myself. Maybe God was right and I am a jerk, but this seems harsh.'" Or maybe not harsh enough.

It is difficult to know how to close this column. So, I'll let commentator William F. Buckley Jr. have the last word: "No one since the Garden of Eden which the serpent forsook in order to run for higher office imputed to politicians great purity of motive."

Nobel Prize Winner Elie Wiesel Dies at 87

Elie Wiesel, who died on July 2 at age 87, was the worldwide symbol of the memory of the Holocaust, having survived Auschwitz-Birkenau and having written *Night*, the classic description of the horrifying experience of a Nazi concentration camp. To **BAR** and readers of its then-sister magazine *Bible Review* (*Bible Review* combined with **BAR** in 2006), Wiesel was known as a sensitive, insightful and wide-ranging Bible commentator.

Probably the most eminent American Biblical scholar in the 1990s and 2000s was Harvard professor Frank Moore Cross, who often wrote for us. It would be a nice balance, I thought, if Elie Wiesel would do likewise from time to time. He readily agreed. He wrote more than 10 pieces for us in the 1990s and 2000s and we became friends. He wrote about Joshua, Korah and Cain and Abel, among others.

Then I got the idea of interviewing Cross and Wiesel together, hoping to catch the flavor of their contrasting approaches. They both agreed. It was a wonderful experience and we printed the joint interview in **BAR** (see www.biblicalarchaeology.org/giants).

After the interview we took pictures. The only picture that includes contemporary scholars that is hanging in my office is the one printed below—Wiesel, Shanks and Cross, from left to right.—**H.S.**

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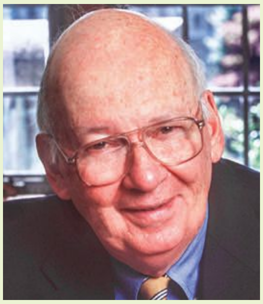

DUKE PHOTOGRAPHY

D. MOODY SMITH JR. (1931–2016)

D. Moody Smith, the George Washington Ivey Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, passed away at age 84 in May.

D. Moody Smith was born in 1931 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He earned his bachelor's degree from Davidson College in North Carolina and went on to pursue first a B.D. (Bachelors of Divinity) from Duke University and then an M.A. and Ph.D. from Yale University. Smith's first teaching appointment was in 1960 at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. In 1965 he joined the faculty of Duke, where he taught both in the Divinity School and the graduate program in religion. Smith's scholarship focused on the Gospel of John and 1–3 John in the New Testament. In a *Bible Review* article, he explored whether John, the author of the previously mentioned Biblical books, was a historian or theologian.*

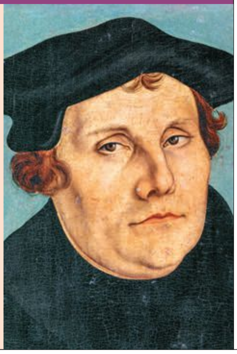
While at Duke, he served as the George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament and the Director of Graduate Studies in Religion. He also acted as President of the Society of Biblical Literature in 1999.

Smith enjoyed tennis and traveling with his wife, Jane, with whom he celebrated 61 years of marriage. He is survived by his wife, four children and six granddaughters.

*D. Moody Smith, "John—Historian or Theologian?" *Bible Review*, October 2004; see also his analysis of portrayals of Jesus in D. Moody Smith, Biblical Views: "Painting a Portrait of Jesus," **BAR**, March/April 2007.

IN HISTORY

OCTOBER 31, 1517 C.E. Martin Luther nailed his famous *Ninety-Five Theses*, which became the foundation of the Protestant Reformation, to the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg, Germany. He also sent a copy to his superior, the Bishop of Brandenburg, and to the Archbishop Albert of Mainz and Madgeburg, who had been selling indulgences.


ERICH LESSING/ART RESOURCE, NY

The Head of All Those Papers

Hazor was a powerhouse in the Bronze Age. Called "the head of all those kingdoms" in Joshua 11:10, Hazor ruled over the surrounding countryside and people groups. Perhaps not surprisingly, Hazor is the largest archaeological site in the Land of Israel.

Excavations at Hazor have yielded lots of pottery. Shlomit Bechar, the winner of the 2016 Sean W. Dever Memorial Prize, examines one particular type of pottery—Black Wheel-Made Ware (BWMW)—uncovered at Hazor in her winning paper, "A Reanalysis of the Black Wheel-Made Ware of the Intermediate Bronze Age," which was published in *Tel Aviv* 42 (2015). According to Bechar, Hazor played a major role in the distribution and consumption of BWMW. Despite previous claims that these vessels were imported from Syria, she suggests that they were only *influenced* by the Syrian vessels.

Shlomit Bechar is a Ph.D. candidate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her M.A. thesis dealt with the architecture and pottery of Intermediate Bronze Age Hazor. Her Ph.D. dissertation deals with the relation between historical events and material culture—with the transition from the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age in northern Israel used as a test case.

Bechar has been an area supervisor at Tel Hazor since 2007 and has recently joined Professor Amnon Ben-Tor as Field Director of the excavations. She is working on the publication of the Bronze Age acropolis of Hazor, as well as the publication of the renewed excavations in the Lower City of Hazor.

The Sean W. Dever Prize was established in 2001 by Norma Dever and Professor William G. Dever in memory of their son Sean.

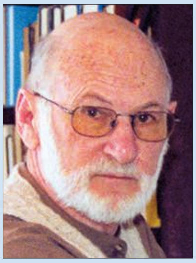
HOW MANY?

How many years did the prophet Isaiah minister naked?

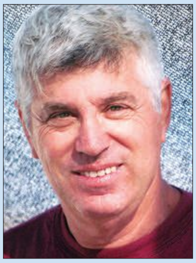
ANSWER ON P. 58

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

How widespread was literacy in the Land of Israel during the tenth and ninth centuries B.C.E.—the days of David and Solomon? Shmuel Ahituv and Amihai Mazar examine inscriptions from this time period and contend that literacy was not limited to society's elite.[1]



Ahituv



Mazar

Writing in the tenth and ninth centuries B.C.E. [early First Temple period] was much more common than it initially appeared. As more excavations of sites dating to this period take place, the quantity of inscriptions increases. More and more inscriptions are found in secure archaeological contexts that have good radiometric dates, allowing us to build a dependable sequence of the development of writing during this period. The data show that there was a great degree of inconsistency in writing because it had not yet fully evolved at that time, as evidenced by unidentifiable signs and by the variability in the writing of letters and in the direction of writing [from left-to-right or right-to-left], particularly in the tenth century B.C.E.

Most of the inscriptions of this period are incised on pottery or stone vessels. Writing in ink was limited to only a small number of very fragmentary inscriptions … [like those] from Tel Rehov. The use of red or red-brown ink is prominent. …

The fragmentary short inscriptions [from the tenth and ninth centuries B.C.E.] are usually insufficient to confirm whether the language is Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic or some other dialect. …

The Gezer Calendar is usually categorized as Hebrew, although this determination has recently been challenged. [André] Lemaire[2] interprets it as a Philistine inscription, and [Dennis] Pardee suggested that it was written in "Canaanite."[3] Contrary to these interpretations, we argue that there is no element in the Gezer Calendar that cannot be considered Hebrew. Moreover, the traces of the name written on the margins of the calendar, אבי], which should be completed as אבי[ו], is a quintessential Israelite name.[4] …

[Nadav] Na'aman suggested that during the reign of David and Solomon, literacy was limited to the palace and royal administration. This concentration of skills changed only in the eighth century B.C.E., when literacy expanded throughout the country.[5] The inscriptions on the storage jars at Tel Rehov were found in different excavation areas [in different strata from different times] and in various types of contexts and buildings: a cultic area, a dwelling that might have been a patrician house, an average house, a building with a unique plan and in the apiary. The rest of the inscriptions were found in various everyday settings. The same can be said about the Gezer Calendar (which many scholars have understood as a writing exercise), as well as most of the other inscriptions of this period, many of which are inscribed on storage jars to designate merchandise, ownership and other routine functions. The corpus presented above, as small as it may be, indicates that most writing tasks were completed for routine purposes on imperishable materials in order to mark goods. It can be surmised that there was a larger body of writing on perishable materials such as papyri that have not been preserved. It is thus untenable to claim that writing was limited only to the state's elite, although we cannot claim that literacy was widespread.

[1] Shmuel Ahituv and Amihai Mazar, "The Inscriptions from Tel Rehov and Their Contribution to the Study of Script and Writing During Iron Age IIA," in Esther Eshel and Yigal Levin, eds., *"See, I Will Bring a Scroll Recounting What Befell Me" (Ps 40:8)—Epigraphy and Daily Life from the Bible to the Talmud* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), pp. 39–68.

[2] André Lemaire, "Phénicien et Philistien: Paléographie et dialectologie," in Maria E. Aubet and Manyuela Barthélemy, eds., *Actas del congreso internacional de estudios fenicios y púnicos* (Cádiz: Universidad de Cadiz, 2000), p. 247.

[3] Cited by Christopher Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel* (Atlanta: SBL, 2010), pp. 29–30; Adam Bean, "Recent Developments and Ongoing Debates Concerning the Calendar Tablet from Gezer: A Summary of the Scholarly Discussion," Abstract of a lecture, SBL Annual Meeting 2010.

[4] Shmuel Ahituv, *Echoes from the Past* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), p. 357.

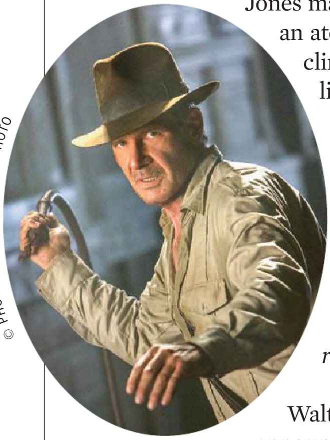
[5] Nadav Na'aman, "Naboth's Vineyard and the Foundation of Jezreel," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33 (2008), pp. 60–61.

Indiana Jones—Back Again

Is the fifth time the charm?

After watching *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008)—the fourth installment of the Indiana Jones franchise starring Harrison Ford—many thought it was time to stop. In fact, many die-hard fans refuse even to associate the fourth film with the original three because they dislike it so much.

While the original trilogy certainly stretched reality, the fourth seemed to obliterate it completely. In one scene, Indiana Jones managed to survive an atomic bomb by climbing into a lead-lined refrigerator. Even though the refrigerator was launched far into the air before crashing back to the earth, Indie walked away virtually unscathed—*really???*



© PHOTOS 12/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

In March 2016, Walt Disney Studios announced that there would be a fifth Indiana Jones movie starring Harrison Ford, now age 74. Details are slim, but we know that it is set to hit theaters on July 19, 2019, and that Steven Spielberg will once again be the director. It appears that George Lucas will not be involved with this project.

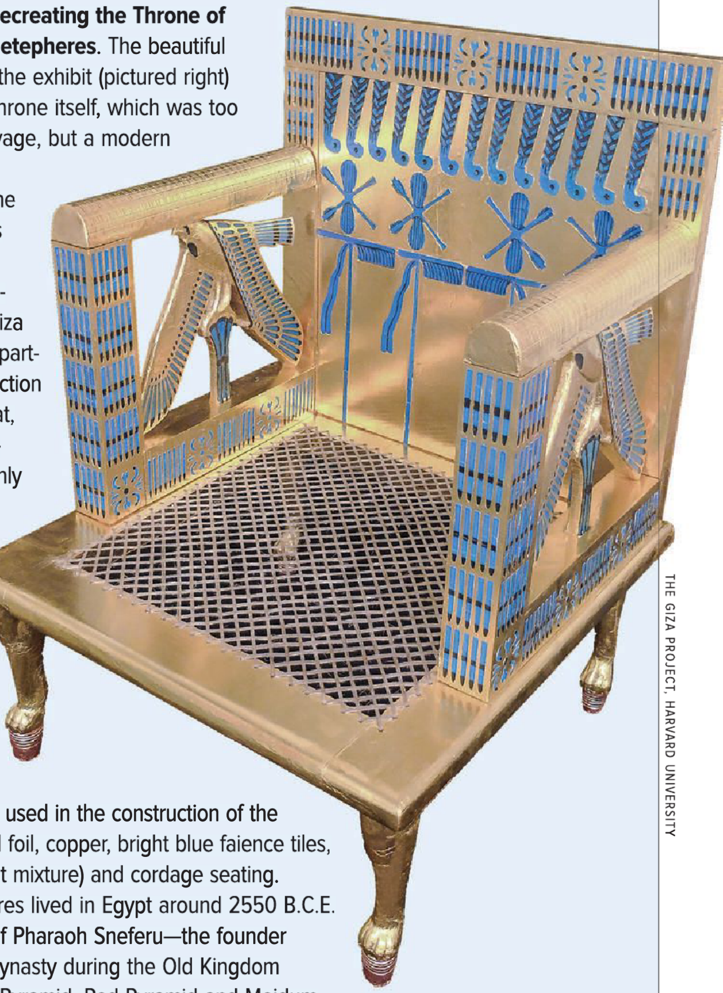
The reception of this announcement has been mixed. While some fans are eager for the franchise to redeem itself, others are tired and wish that it had ended on a high note—with *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989). Only time will tell whether the fifth time's the charm, or if Indie should have retired his whip for good.—**M.S.**

EXHIBIT WATCH

Masterpiece from the Pyramid Age

New life has been breathed into an ancient throne.

Found in the tomb of the Egyptian Queen Hetepheres (c. 2550 B.C.E.), the throne is the focal point of a new exhibit at the Harvard Semitic Museum, **Recreating the Throne of Egyptian Queen Hetepheres**. The beautiful chair on display in the exhibit (pictured right) is not the ancient throne itself, which was too deteriorated to salvage, but a modern reconstruction.



THE GIZA PROJECT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The replica throne was created by Rus Grant and David Hopkins, staff members of Harvard's Giza Project, along with partners. The reconstruction is an impressive feat, especially considering that they had only fragments from the original throne and excavation notes from 90 years ago to use for guidance. The Giza Project team used the same materials to create this throne as were used in the construction of the original: cedar, gold foil, copper, bright blue faience tiles, gesso (a white paint mixture) and cordage seating.

Queen Hetepheres lived in Egypt around 2550 B.C.E. She was the wife of Pharaoh Sneferu—the founder of Egypt's Fourth Dynasty during the Old Kingdom who built the Bent Pyramid, Red Pyramid and Meidum Pyramid—and the mother of King Khufu, the builder of the Great Pyramid.

Along with other burial equipment and the queen's sarcophagus, the original fragments of this throne were uncovered in a small, unfinished chamber, which was located about 100 feet below ground, in Queen Hetepheres's tomb. The famous Egyptologist George Reisner led the Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition that discovered the tomb in 1925. His team carefully collected every fragment from the tomb—sometimes lying stomach-down on mattresses and using tweezers to make sure they missed nothing. They recorded their excavation with extensive notes and photographs, both of which were instrumental to the reconstruction team.

From the queen's tomb in Giza, Egypt, to the Harvard Semitic Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Queen Hetepheres's throne has had quite the journey!

ONGOING
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semiticmuseum.fas.harvard.edu

biblicalarchaeology.org/exhibits For more on this exhibit and others, visit us online.

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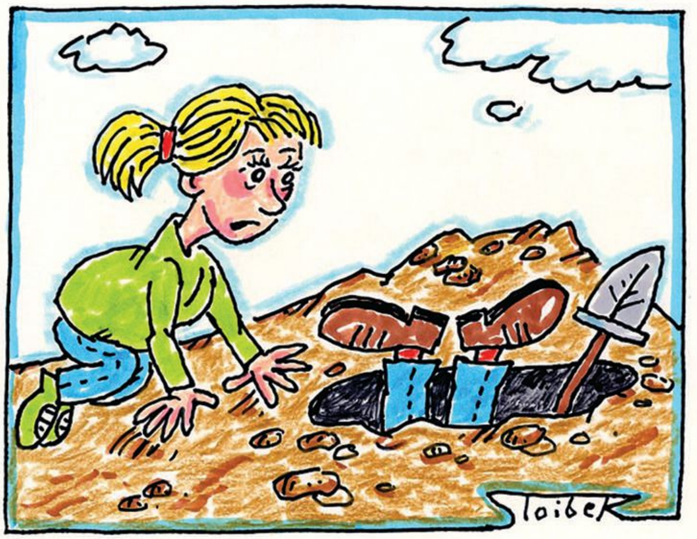

CARLTON STOIBER

“I agree—It looked a lot more glamorous in BAR’s Dig issue!”

—Martin Bowers, Lexington, South Carolina

Thank you to all those who submitted caption entries for our May/June 2016 cartoon (above), based on Ecclesiastes 10:8:

“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a snake.”

We are pleased to congratulate Martin Bowers of Lexington, South Carolina, who wrote the winning caption, and our runners-up:

“Yes, but did you find more scrolls?”

—David Burroughs, Chula Vista, California

“On the positive side, anything you find down there will be considered provenanced!”

—Larry Love, Vero Beach, Florida

Write a caption for the cartoon below (see Daniel 1:8–16), and send it to us by mail or online on our website (see box below):

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Biblical Archaeology Society
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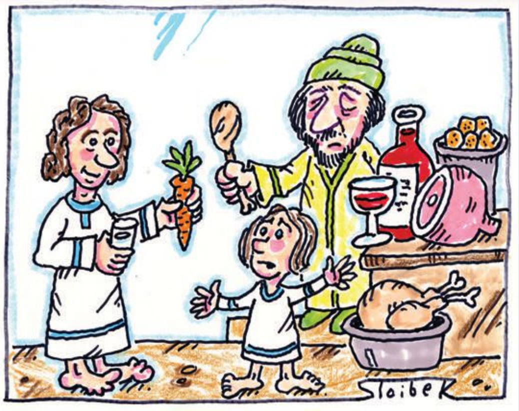
Be sure to include your name and address. The deadline for entries is September 30, 2016. The author of the winning caption will receive a copy of the BAS book *The Origins of Things*, a BAS tote bag and three gift subscriptions to give **BAR** to friends. Runners-up will receive a BAS tote bag and two gift subscriptions.



CARLTON STOIBER

biblicalarchaeology.org/captioncontest

- See additional caption entries for this month’s featured cartoon.
- Submit a caption for our new cartoon.
- Check out past cartoons and captions.
- Send us your ideas for Biblical scenes that would make good cartoons for future contests.

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Reading the Bible Through Ancient Eyes

Richard L. Rohrbaugh

With the advent of multi-national corporations and widespread international travel, it has become increasingly obvious that communication between people of different cultures is difficult at best. In fact a substantial industry has developed, designed to teach diplomats, business people and assorted travelers how to communicate with people from other countries.

Why does this matter to American readers of the Bible? Because of a simple, obvious—but usually overlooked—fact: The Bible is not a Western book. It was written by, for and about people from the Mediterranean world who did not think, live or communicate like Westerners and who would be astonished at many of the things modern, Western readers "find" within its pages. Moreover, few of us are aware of the subtle ways in which we unconsciously import our American culture into the world and language of the Biblical text. The fact is that miscommunication is no less a peril in reading the works of persons from other cultures than in speaking with them face to face.

In Matthew 25:14–30 Jesus tells a story about a rich man going on a journey who entrusted large sums of money to three slave-managers. The two who received the largest sums traded up, doubling the amounts they had taken on deposit. The third slave, however, buried his master's money to ensure that it remained intact. When the returning master learned what happened in his absence, he praised and rewarded the first two slaves and bitterly rebuked slave number three.

Luke also has a version of the story (19:11–27). There each slave receives ten pounds and is told to "do business" with them until the master returns. The first slave makes 1,000 percent on his money and the second 500 percent. Both receive high praise and are rewarded by being placed in charge of ten and five cities, respectively. Thus one prominent western commentary author pronounces the astonishing returns in Luke "a most satisfactory result."[1]

Americans love this story because it seems to be a kind of homespun capitalism on the lips of Jesus. We imagine the master in the story to be an analogue for God and thus see the story as divine affirmation of our Western economic practices of trading and investment.

The problem, however, is that given the "limited good" outlook of ancient Mediterranean cultures, seeking "more" was considered morally wrong. Because the pie was "limited" and already all distributed, anyone getting "more" meant someone else got less. Thus honorable people did not try to get more, and those who did were automatically considered thieves: To have gained, to have accumulated more than one started with, is to have taken the share of someone else. As the early Christian theologian Jerome would later write: "Every rich person is either a thief or the heir of a thief" (*In Hieremiam* II.V.2; CCL LXXIV 61). And as Sirach puts it, "A merchant can hardly keep from wrongdoing, and a tradesman will not be declared innocent of sin" (26:29).

Of course the elite tried to deflect accusations of getting rich at the expense of others by having their affairs handled by slaves—exactly what is described in the story Jesus tells. Shameful, or even greedy, behavior could be condoned in slaves because slaves had no honor nor any expectation of it. As Sirach so wisely says, it amounts to this: "A rich man will exploit you if you can be of use to him, but if you are in need, he will forsake you" (13:4). And exploitation is exactly what this ancient story is about.

The returning master admits to what the third slave knew ahead of time: that he is a "hard" (the Greek term here, *skleros*, is used by ancient writers to describe someone who is cruel, merciless or arrogantly inhumane) man who "reaps where he did not sow and gathers where he did not scatter seed" (Matthew 25:24). *The perfect definition of a thief*! How have we missed that? Moreover, the master in Luke's version is even worse. There he owns up to this same merciless attitude but then goes much further: ordering his enemies slaughtered in his own presence.

And what about the third slave, the one so bitterly rebuked by the returning master and vilified in virtually all Western interpretation for failing to invest the money? In Matthew, he buries the deposit for safekeeping. The rabbis argued that this was precisely the right thing to do so the deposit

CONTINUES ON PAGE 62

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL VIEWS

Pottery in the Computer Age

Andrea Berlin

BAR READERS KNOW THERE IS NO PLACE ON Earth more intensively investigated archaeologically than the Levant. As a corridor between east and west, north and south, as well as the center of gravity for three major world religions, this region has lured scholars since the 19th century. Excavations have revealed the places behind the stories in the Bible and Qur’an: ancient temples, palaces, cities, farmsteads, workshops and graveyards. These same excavations have produced millions of artifacts, none more abundant than pottery. Now, two centuries of discovery later, all that pottery is both an incredible resource and an enormous problem.

Pottery is a resource because it makes human behavior visible. From the earliest agricultural villages through the early modern era, people have used clay vessels for almost every sort of activity: to store, prepare, cook and serve food; to hold perfume; to ship commodities; to burn oil for light; to contain or serve as votive offerings; and to help make the dead more comfortable in the afterlife. Pottery animates the places we excavate.

Pottery also offers analytical evidence for dating, production and exchange through an array of scientific techniques, including Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis, X-Ray Fluorescence and petrographic thin-section.* More than a century of continuous excavation and study have resulted in a gold-mine of data—stylistic, stratigraphic, petrographic and elemental.

So what’s the problem? In a nutshell: information overload. The potential of pottery depends on researchers being able to identify, compare and properly situate what they find—but the system for doing that is broken. Information is couched in arcane jargon, scattered across unsearchable—sometimes obscure—print publications and, increasingly, on unconnected specialist websites. This leads to research that is overly narrow, incomplete, at odds with other ideas and results and sometimes simply a restatement of things already known. Despite excellent intentions, hard work and peer-reviewed publications, this is the current reality.

For the past four years, I have been developing a path toward a new reality. It is called the Levantine Ceramics Project (LCP; www.levantineceramics.org). And it represents a new model for communicating, linking and expanding the use of ceramic data. The LCP is an open-access, crowd-sourced public website (technically a web application, meaning software that is hosted on the worldwide web) devoted to ceramics produced anywhere in the Levant—Turkey, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan and Egypt—from the Neolithic era (c. 5500 B.C.E.) through the time of Ottoman rule (c. 1920 C.E.).

On the LCP you can submit, search, browse and display all types of information: wares and petrofabrics (microscopic rock features); individual vessel descriptions, drawings, photographs, archaeological context and date; petrographic descriptions and thin-sections; etc. There are no restrictions on terminology; contributors may submit the information they have, using their own names and descriptions. Every piece of submitted data remains associated with its contributor as well as its publication references (when available). The application links a vessel’s analytical, descriptive, illustrative and contextual data, even when it is submitted piecemeal by different contributors. Information can be easily edited, removed or rearranged, which makes the LCP an archive as well as a research tool—an especially critical aspect since our discipline is predicated on new discoveries along with reconsideration of older material.

Here are some details of how the LCP works:

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CONTINUES ON PAGE 62

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*See *40 Futures,* Digging Deeper 3 (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2015).

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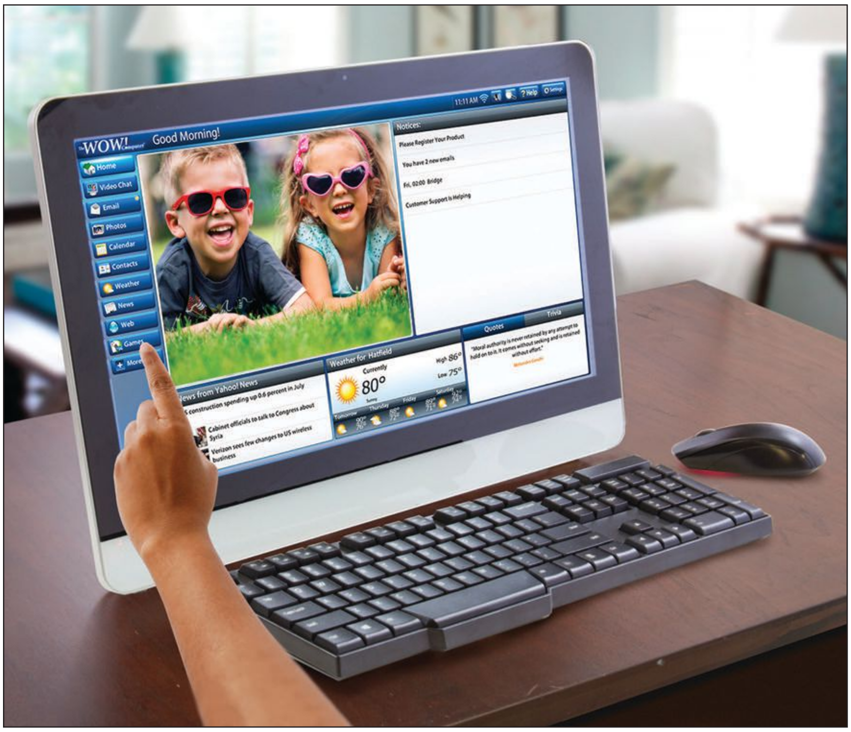

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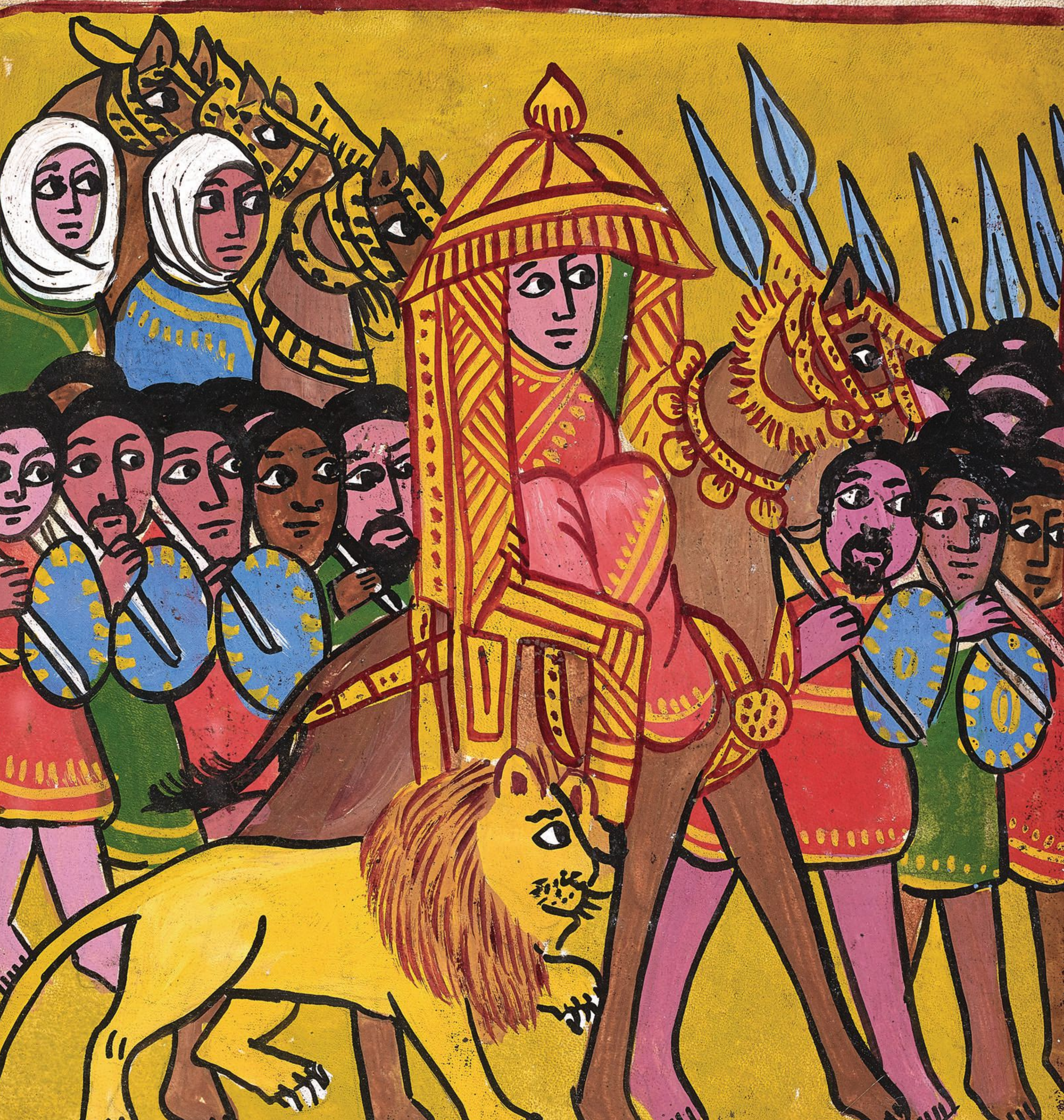

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ARABIA OR AFRICA:

Where Is the Land of Sheba?

Bar Kribus

According to the Bible, the unnamed Queen of Sheba, having heard of King Solomon's wisdom, traveled to Jerusalem to test him. His reputation proved justified: "Solomon answered all her questions" (1 Kings 10:3). "Not even half had been told me," she reported to him (1 Kings 10:7). She presented Solomon with gifts of gold, spices and precious stones. And she praised "the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel" (1 Kings 10:9). Solomon reciprocated with gifts, and the Queen of Sheba "returned to her own land" (1 Kings 10:13; see also 2 Chronicles 9). No mention is made in the Bible of the queen's beauty, of a love affair with King Solomon or of the queen's bearing King Solomon a son. Why then is the queen often perceived as a beautiful queen who had a love affair with the king? And why is it considered common knowledge that this queen came from Ethiopia?

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA rides on a camel, accompanied by guards with shields and spears, women attendants and a lion. The Biblical text says that the Queen of Sheba "came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones" (1 Kings 10:2). After asking King Solomon many questions, the queen was satisfied with his wisdom and wealth, the latter of which she furthered by leaving King Solomon with "one hundred twenty talents of gold, a great quantity of spices, and precious stones" (1 Kings 10:10). The later legend that developed concerning the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon involved a love affair, a son, and the transfer of the Ark of the Covenant from Israel to Ethiopia.

This illustration comes from the 19th-century illuminated manuscript *The History of the Queen of Sheba* from Ethiopia. The manuscript is currently kept in the collections of the Berlin State Library. The Ge'ez text pictured here reads: "The Queen of the South rose up to go to Jerusalem from the ends of the earth, so that she may see the wisdom of Solomon." This references Matthew 12:42.

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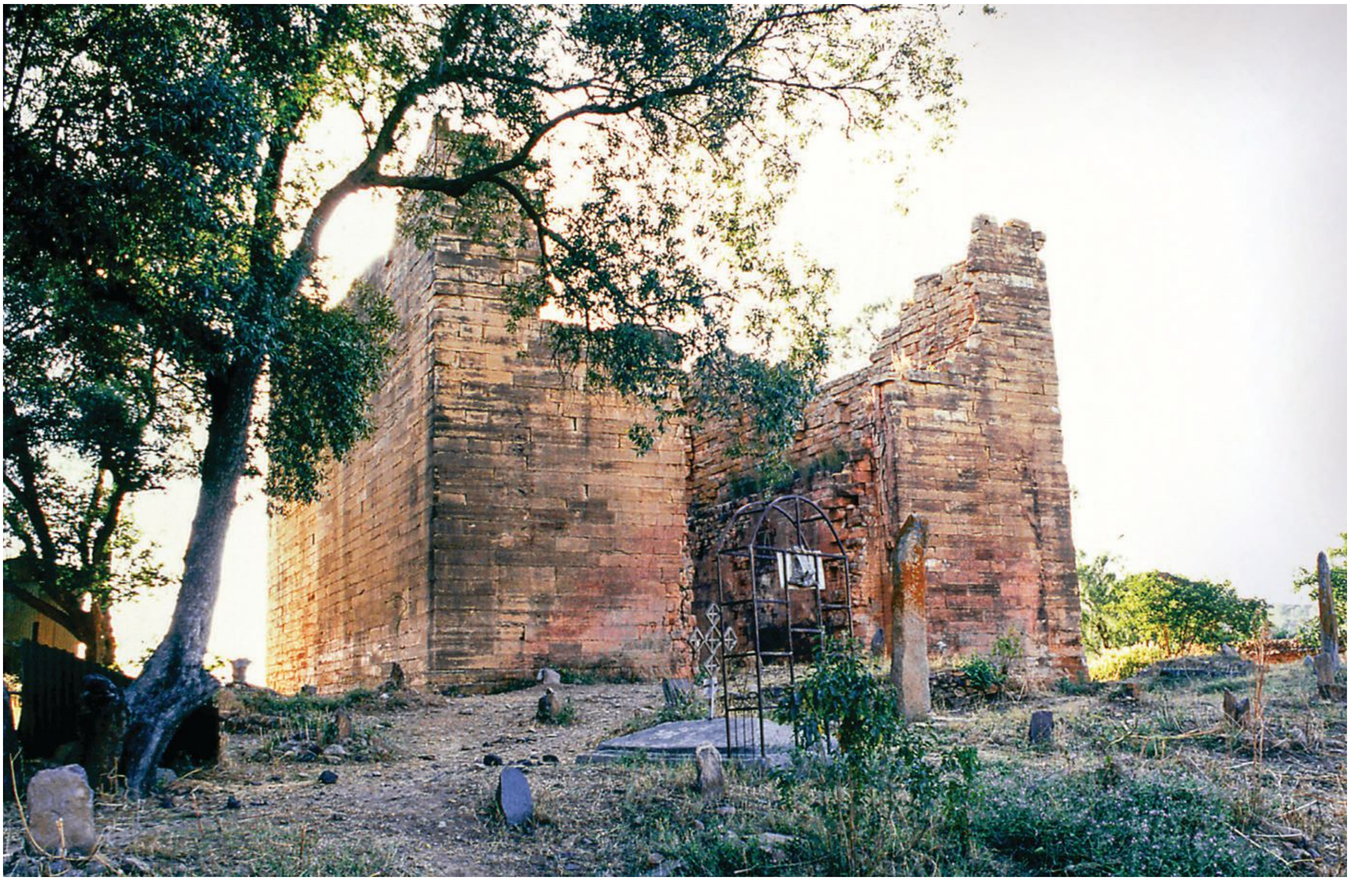

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GREAT TEMPLE AT YEHA. Twenty-three miles northeast of Aksum lies the Great Temple at Yeha, the oldest standing building in Ethiopia. Dated from the seventh to fifth centuries B.C.E., the temple belongs to the Pre-Aksumite culture and shares features with temples in South Arabia from this period. Sixty-one feet long and 49 feet wide, the temple still stands at an impressive height of 43 feet. Its exterior walls were 4 feet thick and constructed out of sandstone blocks, which fit together without mortar—a technique that reflects South-Arabian influences. The temple had a single entrance, in front of which was a portico, and its interior was divided by pillars into five aisles. The eastern end, opposite the entrance, was divided into three chambers. Because of inscriptions found in the area, it is believed that the temple was dedicated to Almaqah, the Sabaean moon god. After the Aksumite kingdom became Christian, the temple was converted into a church.

As is often the case with short but intriguing Biblical stories, the Queen of Sheba's visit has been elaborated in Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions. The most detailed and arguably the most influential development of the story appears in a book titled *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of Kings*)—a cornerstone of Ethiopian Orthodox identity and theology. Its date is controversial. Although some scholars date its composition as late as the 14th century C.E., others contend it is based on earlier traditions that go back as far as the sixth century C.E.[1]

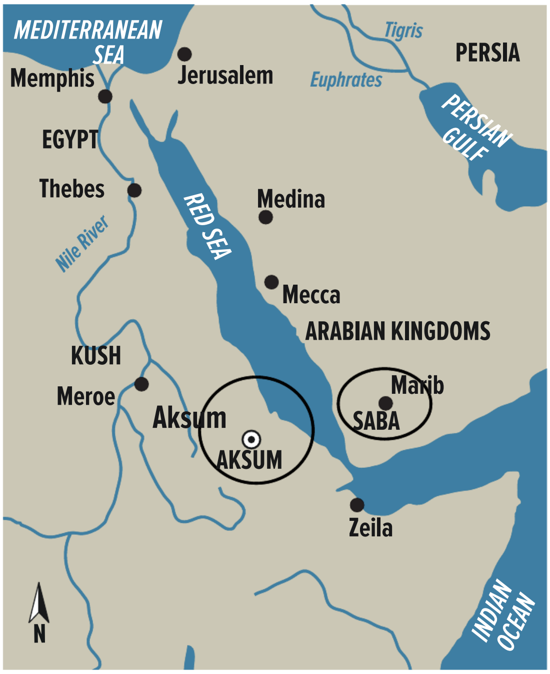
According to the *Kebra Nagast*, the Queen of Sheba was the beautiful queen of Ethiopia. The *Kebra Nagast* states that on her return from Jerusalem, the Queen of Sheba gave birth to Solomon's firstborn son, known as Menelik in the Ethiopian tradition. As a young man, Menelik journeyed to Jerusalem, where King Solomon received him with honor. When Solomon announced his intention to appoint Menelik as his heir, the next king of Israel, Menelik refused; his desire was to return home. Saddened that his firstborn was leaving, Solomon ordered the firstborn sons of the elders of the kingdom to accompany Menelik and establish a new Israel in Ethiopia.

Before Menelik departed, an angel told the son of the Israelite high priest who was to accompany Menelik to make a replica of the Ark of the Covenant and to replace the Ark in the Holy of Holies of the Temple with its replica. Only during the journey to Ethiopia did Menelik discover that the true Ark of the Covenant was being carried in

STUNNING STELAE. The Proto-Aksumites and Aksumites both erected funerary stelae (standing stones) on large platforms to mark burial fields. Over time, the stelae became increasingly elaborate and colossal. Some of the tallest stelae in the world were erected at Aksum and date to the Aksumite period, including the largest extant stele in the world—estimated to be 107 feet tall and 517 tons—which lies in pieces at the Stelae Park in Aksum. The third largest stele at Aksum (pictured right) is about 77 feet tall, with 67 feet above and 10 feet below ground. Carved on three sides, the stele is made to look like a building with ten stories—replete with windows, protruding beams and a false door with a carved handle.

his entourage. In the meantime, Solomon discovered that the true Ark had been removed from the Temple, but he was divinely instructed not to have it returned. It was God's will that the Ark—and with it, God's grace—would depart from Israel (and its people) and reside in Ethiopia. To this day, Ethiopian Christians claim that the Ark of the Covenant resides in a chapel next to the Church of Maryam Tsion (Mary of Zion), the central church of the ancient Ethiopian capital, Aksum.

Ethiopian Christians see the presence of the Ark in Ethiopia as physical proof that they are God's chosen people, both in the flesh and in the spirit. Their kings were seen as direct descendants of the House of David, rulers by divine right. This view of themselves as Israel after the flesh and not only after the spirit may have been one of the reasons leading to the development of a number of unique qualities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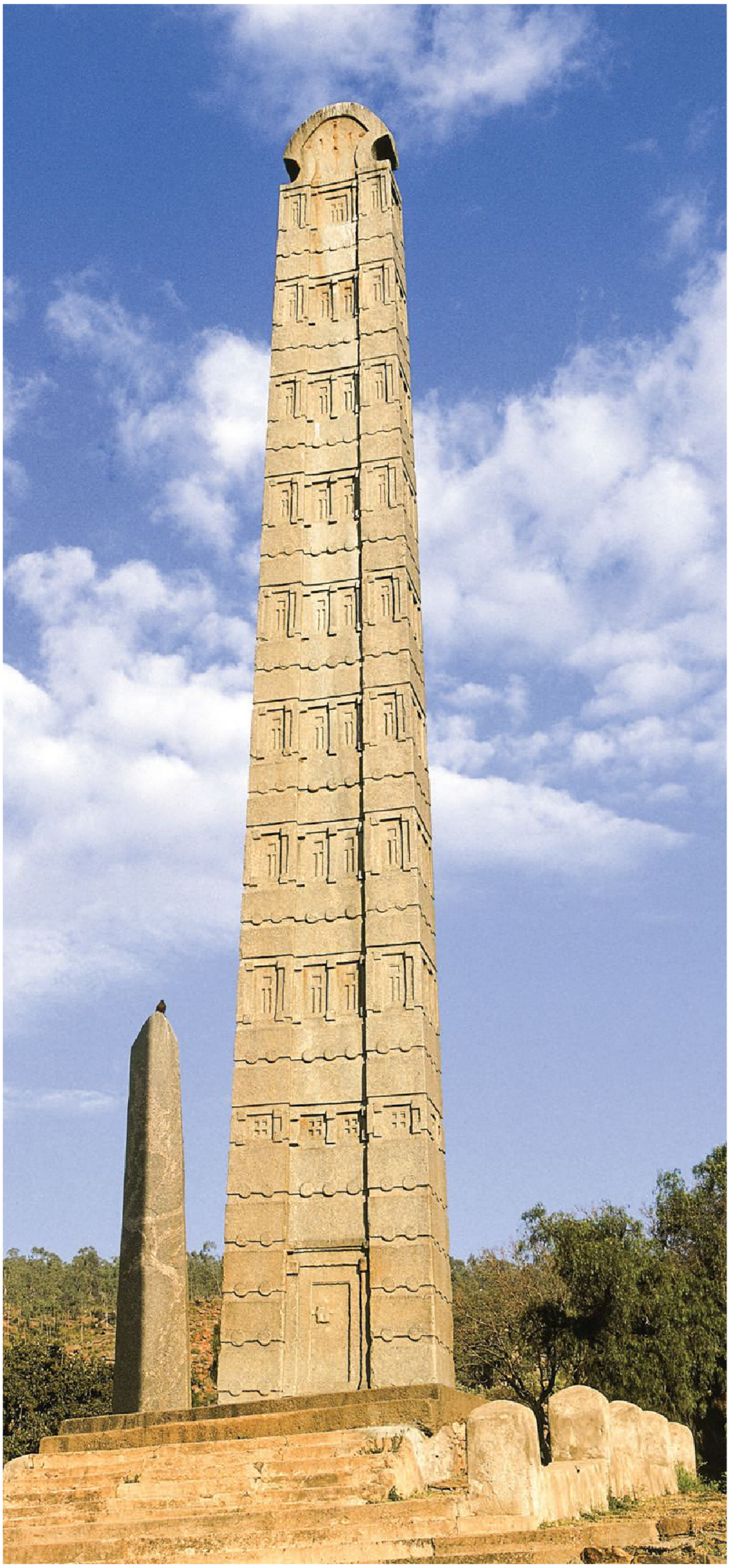

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of the Ethiopian Church: Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity sees many of the religious laws of the Old Testament, and not only of the New Testament, as binding. Ethiopian Christians circumcise their sons on the eighth day, like the Jews. They observe Biblical dietary laws. They consider Saturday a holy day.

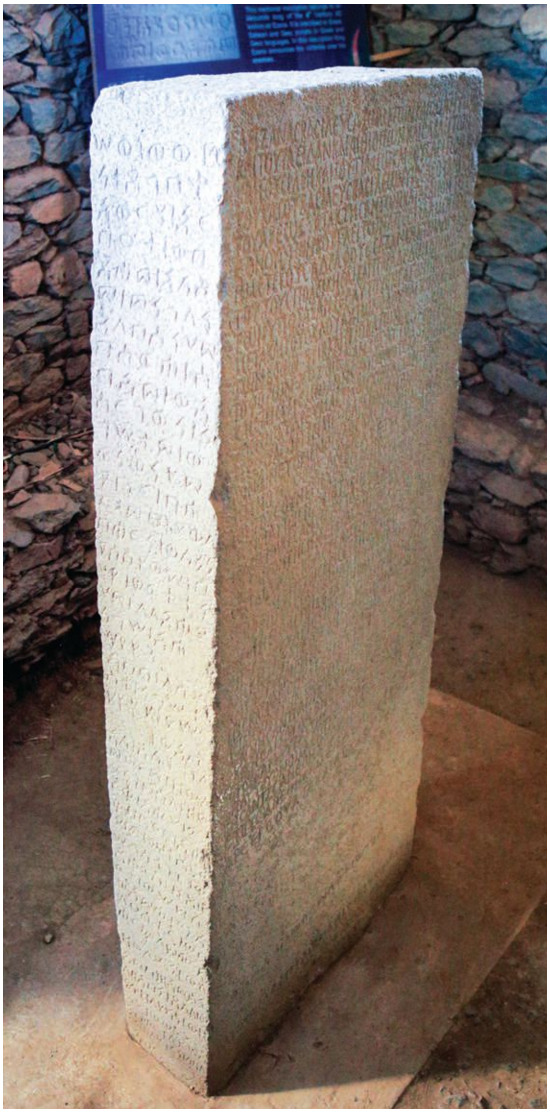
The Ethiopian Christians' view of themselves as Israelites is, in my opinion, best demonstrated by the meeting that took place in 1908 between the Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II and Jacques Faitlovitch, the activist who dedicated his life to building a connection between Ethiopian Jews and the Jewish world. During the meeting, Faitlovitch presented the emperor with books he had written and translated. Faitlovitch describes the emperor's reaction when he came across Hebrew text in one of the books: "The emperor asked me which language this was. My answer, that this was the Hebrew language, amazed the emperor. ... [He] asked if I could read him a few lines. 'I want to hear the language of my ancestors,' he said."[2]

One challenge to the *Kebra Nagast* narrative, which scholars have raised, is that there is a well-documented Kingdom of Sheba (Saba) that existed in Biblical times. It is documented both historically and archaeologically—and it was not in Ethiopia, but rather in southern Arabia (modern-day Yemen).

Moreover, the Kingdom of Saba was well known in Ethiopia; it was the greatest of the South Arabian kingdoms in Biblical times, Ethiopia's neighbor on the opposite shore of the Red Sea. Ethiopia had extensive contacts with this kingdom, and, after the kingdom's demise in the third century C.E., Ethiopia preserved its memory in ecclesiastic literature. In such literature, there is a clear distinction between

CHAPEL OF THE TABLET. According to the *Kebra Nagast*, the Ark of the Covenant traveled with Menelik, the son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, from Israel to Ethiopia. To this day, many Ethiopians believe that the real Ark of the Covenant resides within the Chapel of the Tablet (below) next to the Church of Maryam Tsion in Aksum.

"MARYAM SION IN AXUM NEBENBAU MIT DER BUNDESLADE 2010" BY JENSIS65 IS LICENSED UNDER CC-BY-SA-3.0



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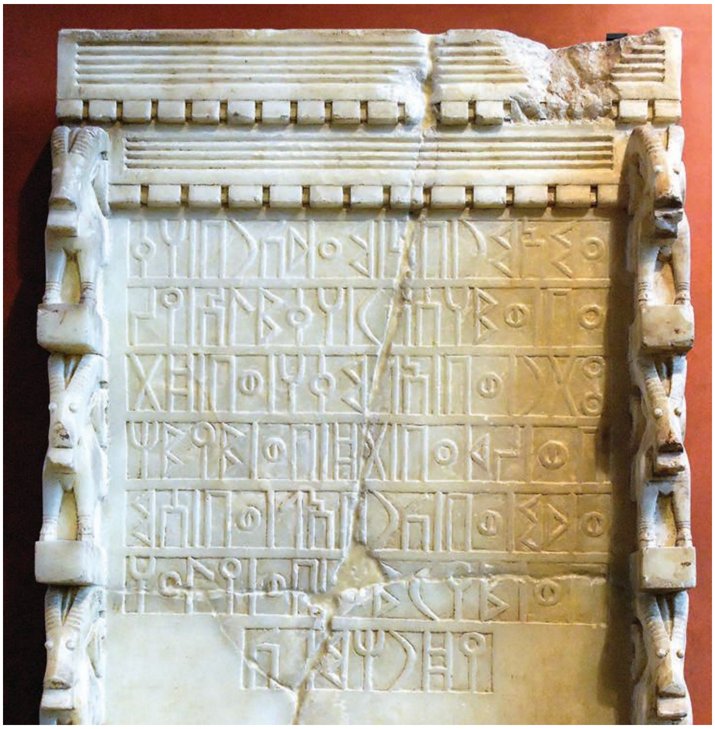

DEPOSIT FROM THE VIELLE CHARITÉ MUSEUM IN MARSEILLE, 1978

ETHIOPIA'S ROSETTA STONE. The Aksumite King Ezana—who ruled in the fourth century C.E.—left behind several inscriptions, one of which is pictured to the left. This royal inscription is written in two different languages—and three different scripts: Greek, Ge'ez, and Ge'ez using the archaic South Arabian alphabet. This inscription is housed in a hut on Enno Littman Road, on the way from Aksum to the tombs of Caleb and Gabra Masqal. The Ge'ez script is visible on the shorter side of the above left inscription, and Greek is visible on the longer side. The backside of the stone, which is not visible from this image, is inscribed with Ge'ez written in the archaic South Arabian alphabet.

The archaic South Arabian alphabet is visible, however, on the above right alabaster votive stele. Written in the Sabaean language, this stele has an inscription addressed to the god Almaqah. It dates to c. 700 B.C.E. and comes from modern-day Yemen, possibly from the area of Ma'rib. This stele is currently in the Louvre Museum.

the Kingdom of Aksum (Ethiopia) and the Kingdom of Saba (Sheba).[3] Yet the *Kebra Nagast* claims that the Queen of Sheba was the queen of Ethiopia and, hence, that Ethiopia was the Biblical Kingdom of Sheba. This identification is common knowledge in Ethiopia and around the world. How did this dual identification of the Kingdom of Sheba come to be?

The beginning of an answer may lie in the fact that the earliest polities in the Ethiopian highlands (c. 800–400 B.C.E., parallel to the Iron Age in the Near East) embraced some elements of South Arabian culture. South Arabian-style temples were built in Ethiopia.[4] South Arabian gods were worshiped there. South Arabian script was used, as well as the central South Arabian religious symbol of the disc and crescent (a symbol prominent in South Arabia that also appears in other parts of the Middle East). Some of the Ethiopian kings in this period used the South Arabian royal title "Mukarib." Two inscriptions from this time even refer to a "Mukarib of Da'amat [the name of an Ethiopian polity at the time] and Saba (Sheba)."[5]

What do all these South Arabian elements in Ethiopia mean? At one time it was thought that the founders of advanced civilization in Ethiopia were South Arabians from the opposite shore of the Red Sea, who immigrated there in large numbers.[6]

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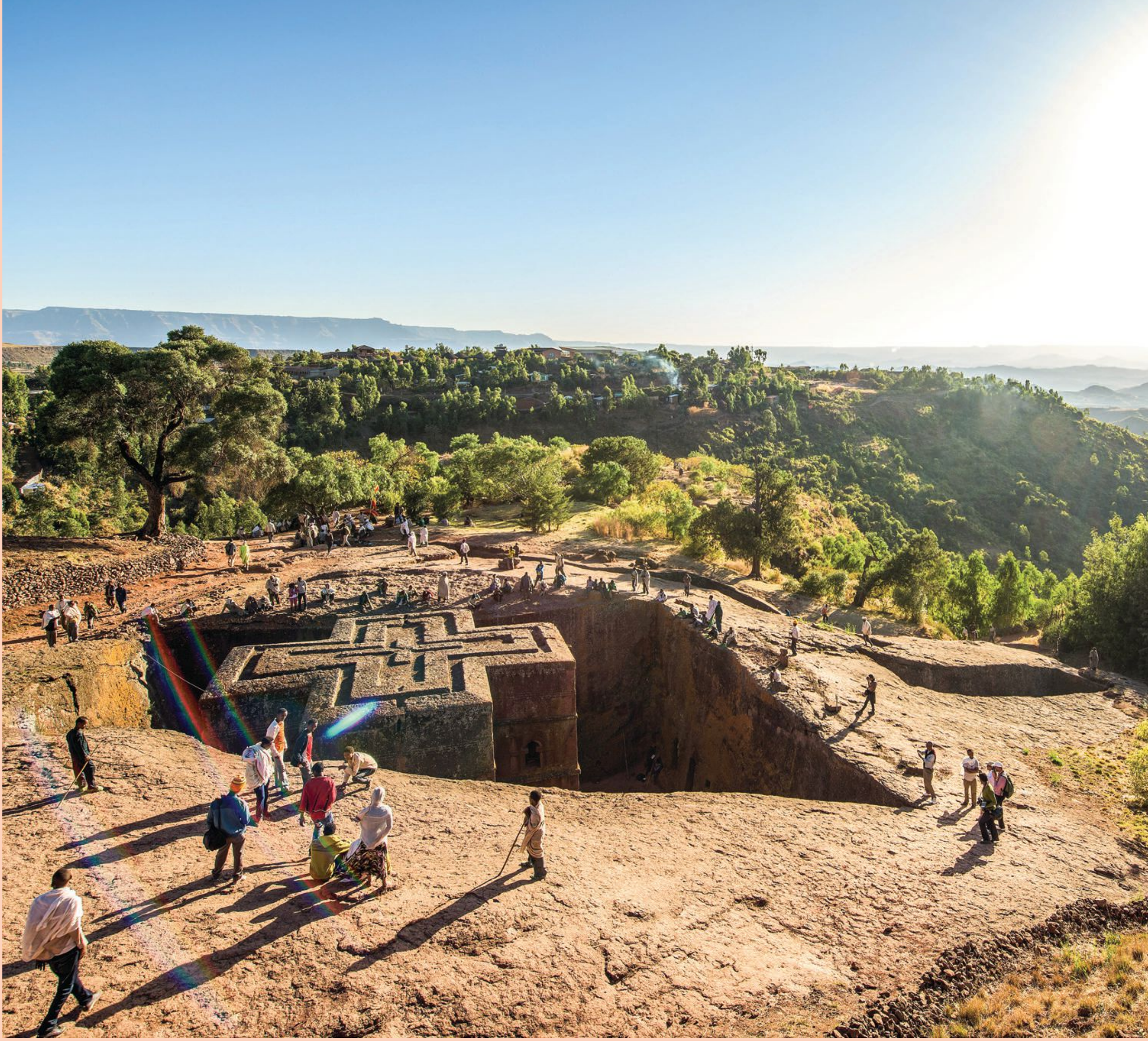

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The Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela

While many spectacular churches have been constructed above ground in Ethiopia, perhaps the country's most famous churches are the ones carved out of stone. Located 150 miles south of Aksum, Lalibela is the best example of Ethiopia's hypogean (rock-hewn) architectural tradition. With 11 rock-hewn churches, Lalibela is understandably a place of pilgrimage for those in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The site Lalibela was originally called Roha, but it eventually took the name of King Lalibela, who ruled around 1200 C.E. as part of the Zagwe dynasty. King Lalibela is traditionally attributed as the builder of all the churches at the site.

Lalibela's 11 churches are carved out of a hillside, which is made of soft reddish volcanic rock. The churches can be divided into two complexes—an eastern and a northern complex—that are connected through a series of carved passageways and naturally occurring wadis. Six churches are featured in the northern complex and four in the eastern complex. The 11th church—Beta Giyorgis (Church of St. George)—stands alone and is not part of either interconnecting complex.

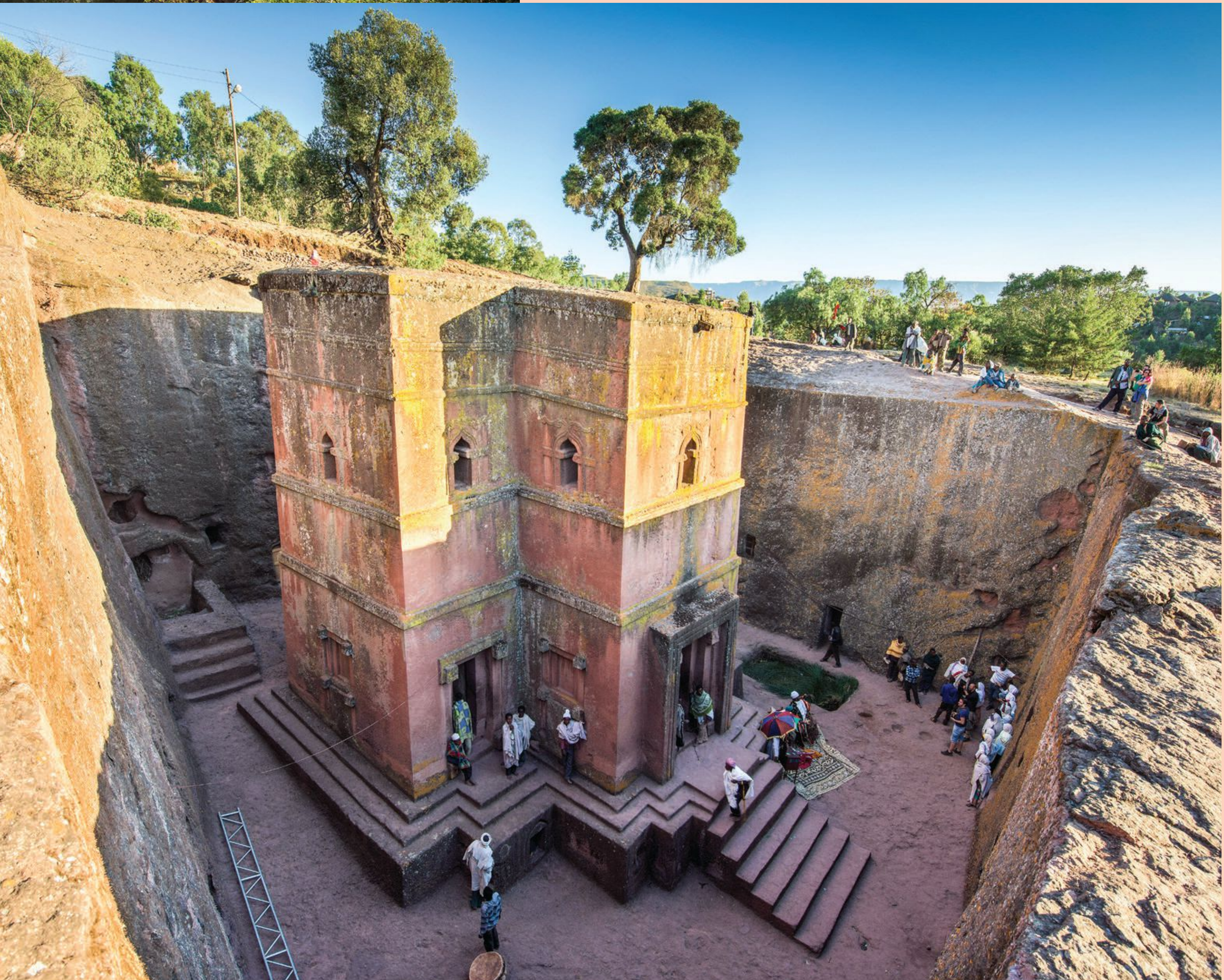
Shaped like a cross, Beta Giyorgis sits on a stepped platform inside a 72-by-72-foot courtyard that is 36 feet deep (see right image). Originally, it was accessible only from the west by means of a long approach—measuring nearly 100 feet—that led uphill and connected the church to the wadi below. Standing at the same level as the church, it is not immediately apparent that Beta Giyorgis is shaped

© KAREL TUPÝ/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

like a cross, but from above (see left image), it becomes clear that not only is it shaped like a cross, but that Greek crosses have been carved into its roof as well.

Beta Giyorgis has three doors and twelve windows. Each of the windows is adorned by a cross and floral motif carved in relief above its opening. An additional nine false windows are carved into the exterior of the church at the same level as the doors, but they do not open into the church's interior.

Of all the churches at Lalibela, Beta Giyorgis is the best preserved. Dated to the late 12th or early 13th century, it is also one of the latest churches at the site. The other churches are estimated to have been built over a span of several centuries—from the 10th through the 13th centuries or later.



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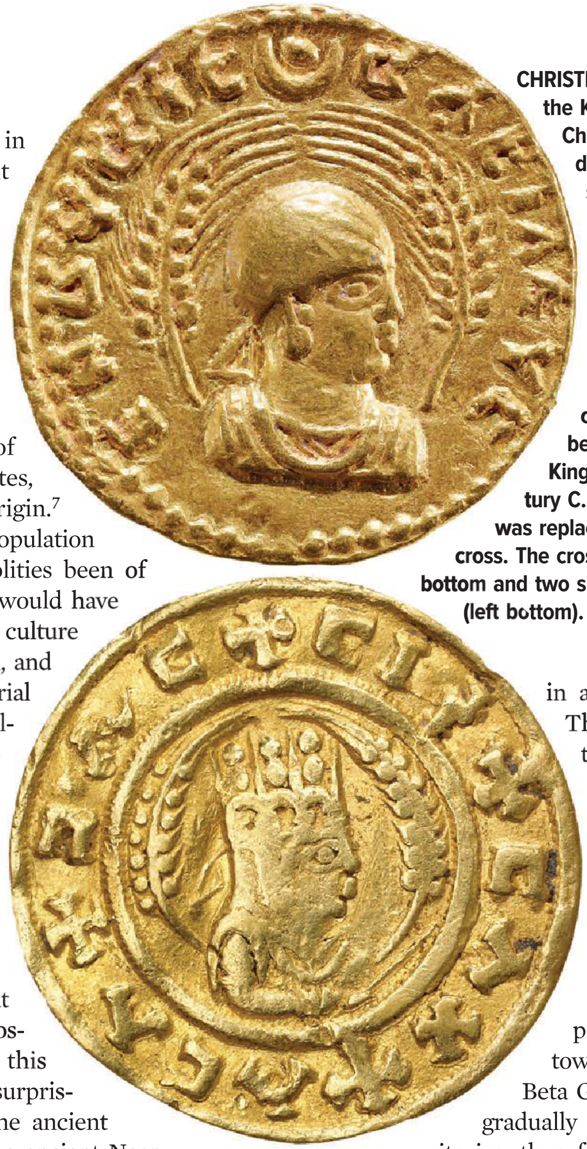


CHRISTIANIZING COINAGE. Before the Kingdom of Aksum was Christian, the polytheistic disc and crescent religious symbol was prominent in royal iconography. For example, it appears at the top of the left top coin of the Aksumite king Endubis from the late third century C.E. When the Aksumite kingdom converted to Christianity, beginning in the reign of King Ezana in the fourth century C.E., this religious symbol was replaced with the Christian cross. The cross is depicted at the top, bottom and two sides of King Ezana's coin (left bottom).

BOTH INSETS: © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM/ART RESOURCE, NY

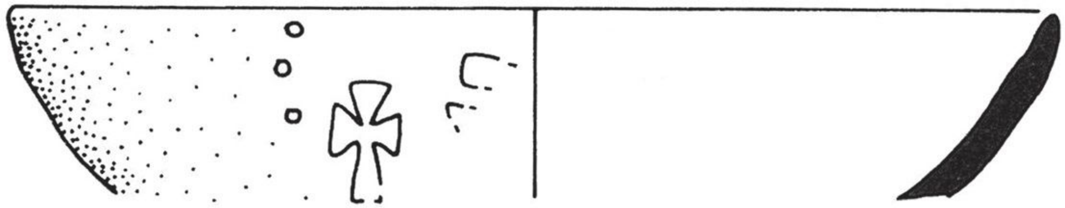
However, with advances in archaeological research, it has become clear that the situation was more complex: While elements of elite culture, such as temples and inscriptions, were influenced by South Arabian culture, other elements, such as pottery, stone tools, forms of burial and even cultic sites, were of local African origin.[7] Had the majority of the population of the early Ethiopian polities been of South Arabian origin, we would have expected that the material culture of these polities in general, and not only the official material culture designed by the rulers and the elite, be affiliated with South Arabian material culture.

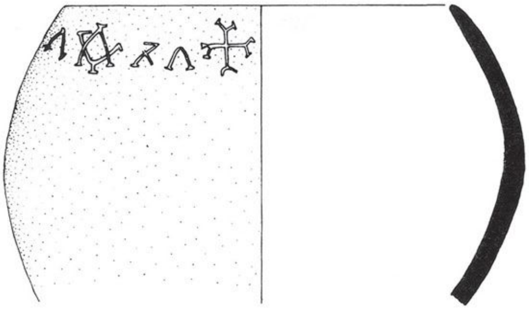
Hence, it stands to reason that the Ethiopian elite imitated a number of aspects of the culture of kingdoms on the other side of the Red Sea that were highly advanced, prosperous and powerful at this time. This should not be surprising. It was common in the ancient world—as it is today. In the ancient Near East, Greek culture, followed by Roman culture, had profound influences on local populations in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods. In modern times, elements of American culture are embraced and imitated worldwide. Perhaps these ancient Ethiopians even saw themselves as connected in some way with the peoples of South Arabia. Could that be why some early Ethiopian monarchs claimed to be "Mukarib of Da'amat *and Saba*"?

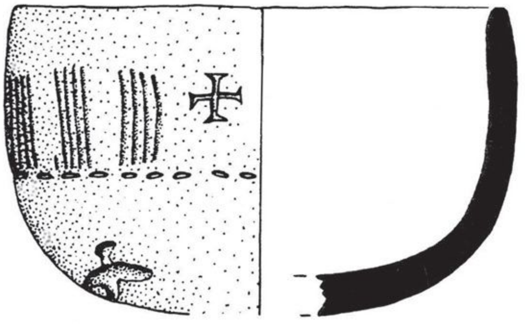
At the end of the fifth to the beginning of the fourth century B.C.E., these Ethiopian polities began to decline. Temples were abandoned, and indications of South Arabian-influenced elite culture became scarce. Around the fourth century B.C.E., a new polity was formed on a hill known today as Beta Giyorgis (Church of St. George) hill. Instead of building monumental temples, the people of this polity erected stelae, standing stones, on large platforms in association with burials. These burial fields seem to be the principal cultic centers of this polity and continue an African tradition of erecting standing stones on burial fields.[8] Between the first century B.C.E. and the first century C.E., the people of this polity founded a new town, Aksum, at the foot of Beta Giyorgis hill. Its residents gradually took control of vast territories, thus forming the Kingdom of Aksum. At its peak between the third and the sixth centuries, the Kingdom of Aksum ruled an area extending from the Nile Valley (modern-day Sudan) through the northern Ethiopian Highlands to the Red Sea coast (modern-day Eritrea). At times, the kingdom also controlled parts of South Arabia (modern-day Yemen). This kingdom would later evolve into modern-day Ethiopia.

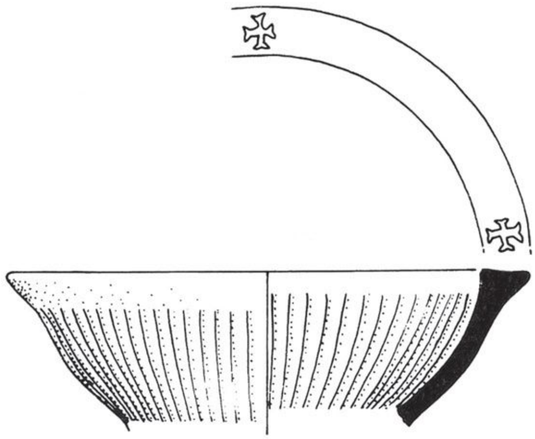
The Aksumite kingdom has become so important in Ethiopian history that scholars refer to the polity on Beta Giyorgis hill, from which it developed, as the Proto-Aksumite polity—and the Iron-Age polities that preceded it as Pre-Aksumite polities.

The material culture of the Aksumite kingdom was in many ways derived from its Proto-Aksumite predecessor. For example, the focus of the cult continued to be burial fields with stelae. The largest of these fields, probably the burial place of the









TELLTALE POTS. While iconography on coins is a good indicator of the religious beliefs of the ruling elite, iconography on pottery—made by local craftsmen and used by the general public—is a better gauge for the religious beliefs of the masses. By the sixth century C.E., a large portion of the Kingdom of Aksum's population had converted to Christianity. This is demonstrated by the number of Christian crosses that appear on pottery. A variety of crosses are etched on these drawings of four different Brown Aksumite ware bowls. One (top) has a flare-arm cross below the rim, while another (middle right) features a cross motif along its ledge. Still another (bottom left) displays two crosses: a flared-tip cross below its rim and a simple beaded vertical cross at its base.

ALL: FROM S.C. MUNRO-HAY, *EXCAVATIONS AT AKSUM* (LONDON: THE BRITISH INSTITUTE IN EASTERN AFRICA, 1989)

Aksumite kings, includes some of the largest standing stones ever erected, the tallest of which was 107 feet tall. These stelae are beautifully carved to represent multi-storied buildings constructed in an architectural style unique to the Aksumites. Interestingly enough, no large and central pre-Christian Aksumite temple is known—at least so far.[9] This demonstrates further that in terms of cult, and probably identity, the Proto-Aksumites and Aksumites followed a tradition different from that of the Pre-Aksumite polities.

However, not all aspects of Aksumite culture are derived directly from Proto-Aksumite culture. Some are affiliated with South Arabia: Aksumite coins imitate South Arabian coins. A deity known from South Arabia and other locations in the Middle East, *Astar,* is mentioned in Aksumite inscriptions together with local deities. And the disc and crescent religious symbol became the official Aksumite religious symbol.

Some Aksumite royal inscriptions list the regions under Aksumite control.[10] The most widespread formula mentions Aksum first, followed by Saba (Sheba) and Himyar, the kingdom that inherited Saba as the central South Arabian kingdom in the third century C.E. Only then are other regions mentioned, many of which are much closer to the city of Aksum than South Arabia. This demonstrates the importance of South Arabia in the eyes of Aksumite rulers. Interestingly enough, such inscriptions claiming Aksumite control over South Arabia appear at times when the Aksumite kingdom did not actually rule South Arabia, indicating that the claim of ruling South Arabia had a strong ideological quality to it.

A more subtle indication of South Arabian importance in the Aksumite kingdom: Aksumite royal inscriptions declaring the victories of the king are recorded in three types of script: (1) Greek, the language of the Roman east and of international trade; (2) Ge'ez, the official language of the Kingdom of Aksum; and (3) Ge'ez written with the archaic South

BAR KRIBUS

ABBA PANTALEWON. On a rocky pinnacle about 2 miles east of Aksum rests the monastery of Abba Pantalewon. Architectural elements dated to Aksumite times were discovered there, as well as walls that were described as similar to those of the Great Temple at Yeha, belonging to the Pre-Aksumite culture. An Aksumite inscription mentioning a dedication to Ares, the Greek god of war, was also uncovered at the site. Based on these finds, scholars have suggested that a Pre-Aksumite temple, followed by a pre-Christian Aksumite temple, stood there before the site was converted into a Christian monastery.

Arabian alphabet rather than the Ge’ez alphabet. Writing Ge’ez in the South Arabian script meant that the inscription was not practical; Ge’ez speakers, as well as speakers of South Arabian languages, would have a hard time deciphering it. Thus, the use of South Arabian letters implies that the letters themselves had a symbolic meaning.

Could the appearance of all these South Arabian-affiliated elements indicate that the rulers of the Aksumite kingdom were intentionally advertising their connection with South Arabian heritage? With the conquest of the former territories of the Pre-Aksumite polities, could the Aksumite kings have tried to demonstrate to the peoples of these territories that they were part of the same, Pre-Aksumite tradition? Or could renewed contact with South Arabia have re-stimulated Ethiopian interest in its culture?

In the fourth century, something happened that would change the destiny of Ethiopia for millennia. Ezana, the Aksumite king, adopted Christianity. This is attested by the coins minted during his reign. The earliest of these bear the polytheistic disc and crescent symbol and thus indicate that at the beginning of his rule, he officially followed the polytheistic faith of his predecessors. The latter issues of these coins bear the cross, indicating that he was, by the time they were minted, Christian.[11] This transformation is also demonstrated in his royal inscriptions. The earliest of these mention deities worshiped in the Aksumite kingdom before the spread of Christianity: Mahrem, Astar, Beher and Meder. An inscription which has been interpreted as representing a transitional phase mentions only one god: the “Lord of Heaven.” An additional inscription is undoubtedly Christian, as it bears the following formula: “In the faith of God and the power of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who saved for me the kingdom, by the faith of his son Jesus Christ, who has helped me and will always help me.”[12]

An account of the arrival of Christianity to the Aksumite kingdom is also described in the *Ecclesiastical History* of the Byzantine historian Rufinus of Aquileia, written around 400 C.E.[13] According to Rufinus, two brothers from Tyre (in modern-day Lebanon), Frumentius and Aedesius, were on a ship that docked in a forbidden harbor in “India” (a name used in Roman-Byzantine times to describe the lands on both sides of the Red Sea and beyond). From the context, it can be understood that the harbor served the Aksumite kingdom. The ship was seized, the crew killed, and the two brothers brought before the king. The king was so impressed with them that he gave

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How Biblical Hebrew Changed

Avi Hurvitz

People often think of the Hebrew Bible as having been written in a single language called Biblical Hebrew and this language being the same from beginning to end. In fact, the Hebrew language went through three different phases during the Biblical period, and these three phases are reflected in different passages and books. In short, Biblical Hebrew is far from being homogeneous.

Despite its seemingly uniform façade—beginning with Genesis and ending with Chronicles—beneath the surface, various strata reflect considerable diversity. A linguistic analysis of this data often allows us to mark chronological milestones in the history and development of Biblical Hebrew as crystallized and preserved in the so-called Masoretic text, the standard Hebrew Bible in use today.* The great Semitists and Hebraists of the 19th century already dealt with this matter, and modern linguistic scholarship confirms their basic chronological conclusions.

Biblical Hebrew may be divided into three principal historical strata: (1) Archaic Biblical Hebrew, (2) Standard (or Classical) Biblical Hebrew and (3) Late (or post-Classical) Biblical Hebrew. This division, on the whole, is widely accepted among linguists and philologists of Biblical Hebrew, although it is somewhat arbitrary because developments in languages do not occur overnight, and transitions from one phase to another are mostly gradual.

The limited scope of the Hebrew Bible—in size, content and subject matter—significantly restricts our ability to describe exhaustively the various linguistic strata it preserves. It is therefore of great importance to examine extra-Biblical sources that can expand and complete what we know in places where the Biblical picture is sketchy. Thus, for instance, texts from Ugarit in Syria, dating to the mid-second millennium B.C.E., make a significant contribution to our understanding of the background and nature of the language of archaic Biblical poetry. Similarly, inscriptions preserved from the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. provide us with invaluable information regarding the study of Biblical prose from

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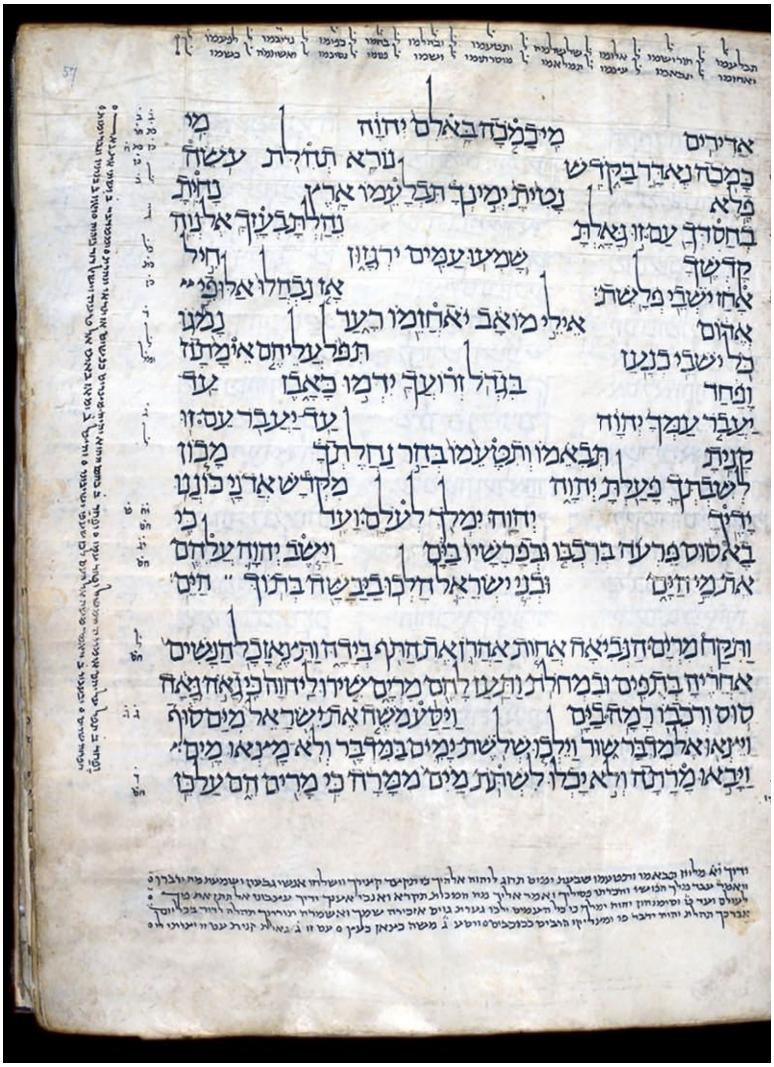
*See Yosef Ofer, "The Mystery of the Missing Pages of the Aleppo Codex," **BAR**, July/August 2015; Emanuel Tov, "Searching for the 'Original Bible,'" **BAR**, July/August 2014; David Marcus and James A. Sanders, "What's Critical About a Critical Edition of the Bible?" **BAR**, November/December 2013; Yosef Ofer, "The Shattered Crown, 60 Years After the Riots," **BAR**, September/October 2008; Harvey Minkoff, "The Aleppo Codex—Ancient Bible from the Ashes," *Bible Review*, August 1991.



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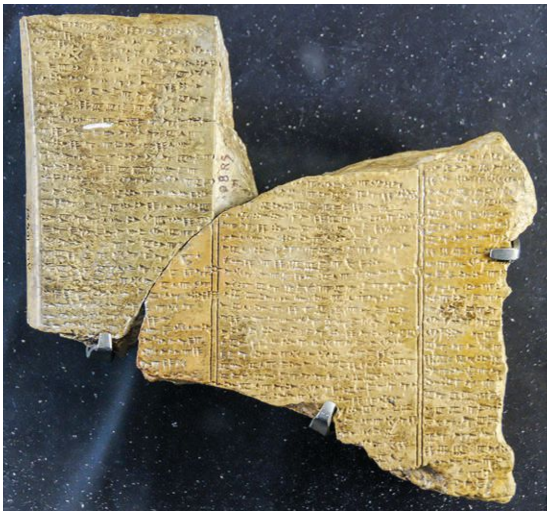
HEBREW FROM ANCIENT SONGS. Exodus 15, the Song of the Sea—one of the oldest passages in the Hebrew Bible—was composed in Archaic Biblical Hebrew. The Song of the Sea describes Yahweh's deliverance of the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery. While the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea safely, the pursuing Egyptians were drowned, according to Exodus 15:4.

With its special brickwork layout, the Song of the Sea is set apart from the surrounding text, a pattern followed in Torah scrolls to this day. Another passage in the Hebrew Bible that follows this special structure is the Song of Deborah in Judges 5. This page comes from the London Codex, one of the oldest surviving Hebrew Bibles, likely dated to the 10th century C.E. The London Codex contains the masoretic notes compiled by Aaron ben Asher, a 10th-century scholar from Tiberias, Israel. Ben Asher's notation is considered to be the most authoritative masoretic version. Masoretic notation *(Masorah)* is a body of rules of pronunciation, spelling, vocalization and intonation of the scriptural text that is intended to preserve, explain and transmit it correctly.



TODD BOLEN/BIBLEPLACES.COM

WHAT'S UGARITIC GOT TO DO WITH IT? Dating to the middle of the second millennium B.C.E., this clay tablet from the site of Ugarit (Ras Shamra) in Syria is written in Ugaritic, a Northwest Semitic language, inscribed in alphabetic cuneiform script. It features the Baal Cycle, a mythological text that tells how the storm god Baal defeated first Yam (the sea god) and then Mot (death). Ugaritic helps illuminate Archaic Biblical Hebrew.

the Standard or Classical stratum. And, finally, documents and texts in Aramaic and Hebrew from the Dead Sea Scrolls and rabbinic literature, dating from the second half of the first century B.C.E. until the first centuries C.E., enable us to identify the linguistic features of the Bible's post-Classical stratum.*

1. Archaic Biblical Hebrew is documented in the Bible, particularly in the poetic parts of the Pentateuch and in the Early Prophets (e.g., the well-known Song of the Sea [Exodus 15] and Song of Deborah [Judges 5]), as well as in hymns from the Book of Psalms.**

2. Standard (or Classical) Biblical Hebrew is found in the prose sections of the Pentateuch and the Early Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah and in the Classical prophecies of the Later Prophets like Hosea, Amos and Micah.

3. Late (or post-Classical) Biblical Hebrew is found primarily in the late compositions included in the third section of the Hebrew Bible known as the Writings—in such books as Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

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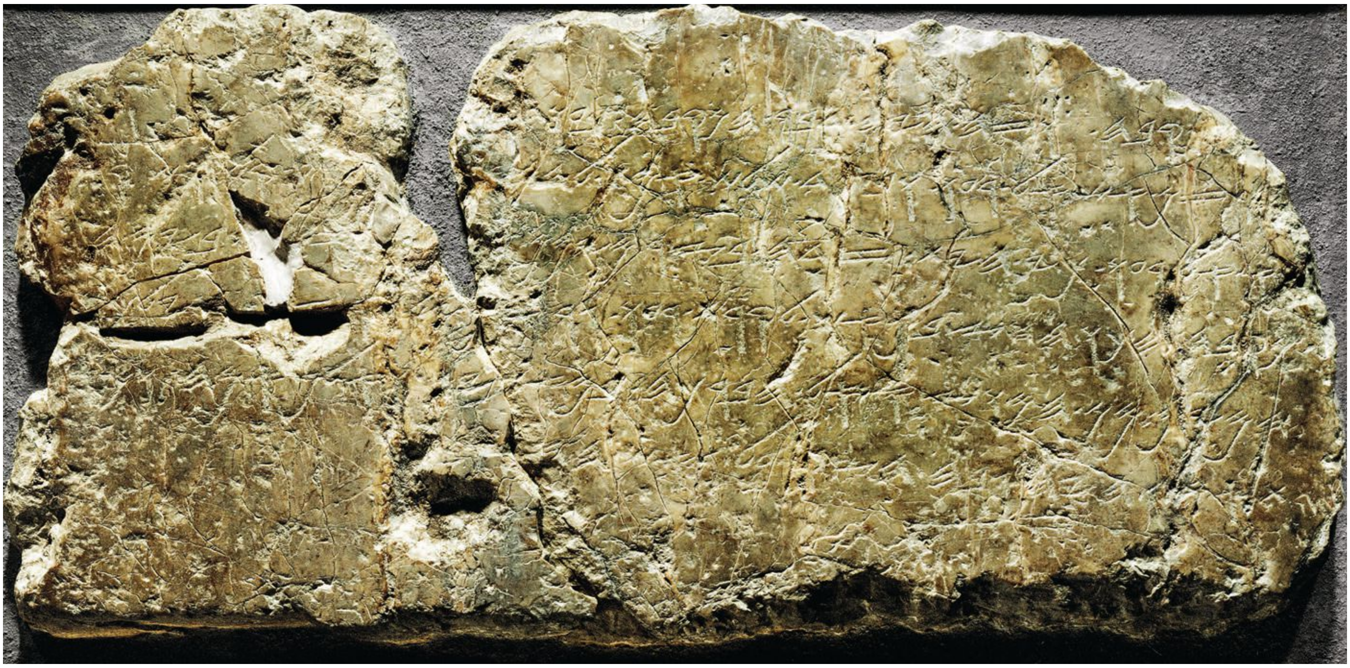
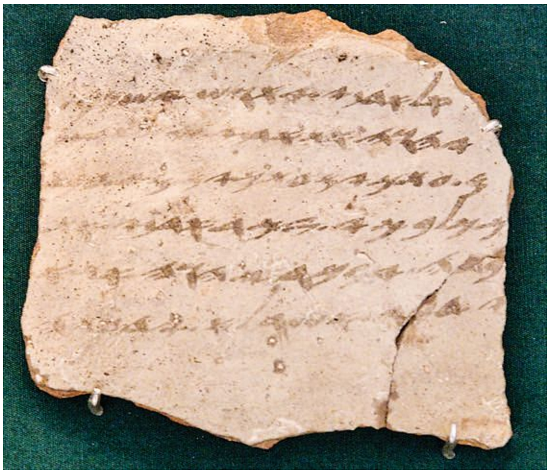
*See Sidnie White Crawford, "A View from the Caves," **BAR**, September/October 2011; Steve Mason, "Did the Essenes Write the Dead Sea Scrolls?" **BAR**, November/December 2008; Ada Yardeni, "A New Dead Sea Scroll in Stone?" **BAR**, January/February 2008.

See Paul Sanders, "Missing Link in Hebrew Bible Formation," **BAR, November/December 2015.


ERICH LESSING/ART RESOURCE, NY

IT LOOKS LIKE ONE WORD! The Siloam Inscription and the Lachish Letters are considered Classic or Standard Biblical Hebrew. Dating from just before 701 B.C.E., the Siloam Inscription (above) was discovered in Hezekiah's Tunnel near the Siloam Pool in the City of David in southeastern Jerusalem. The pictured Lachish letter (right), dating from c. 589 B.C.E., comes from a collection of letters—written on potsherds—found at Lachish, Israel. The Lachish letters date to the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah.


A.D. RIDDLE/BIBLEPLACES.COM

Scholarly opinion is sharply divided regarding the age of the first category. But linguists and philologists do agree that the Classical and Late strata of Biblical Hebrew may indeed be assigned to the First and Second Temple periods, respectively. This periodization is corroborated by the fact that the sixth century B.C.E. marks a significant turning point in Biblical literature's linguistic history occasioned by the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. Compositions written from this time forward exhibit distinctive linguistic features not found in texts written in Standard Biblical Hebrew.[1] Furthermore, many of these linguistic innovations also appear in extra-Biblical sources that date to the post-Classical period. The correlation between the two sets of data—in the Bible and in extra-Biblical literature—substantiates the conclusion that the linguistic background of the later period is reflected in these sources.

This last linguistic development is undoubtedly a direct outcome of both the exile to Babylon and the return to the Land of Israel. On the one hand, the deportation to Babylon of the Jewish people—who included the intellectual stratum of Jewish society that perpetuated its culture and literature—caused the physical detachment of the exiles from their national linguistic milieu. On the other hand, these exiles lived in Babylon for about 70 years (i.e., some two to three generations) among a foreign population whose written and spoken language was Aramaic. Furthermore, during the Restoration period (when the exiles were permitted to return), Aramaic reached the height of its influence and distribution, serving as the *lingua franca*, or common tongue, of the entire ancient Near East and the language of correspondence of the succeeding Persian kingdom's administration. The boundaries of Imperial Aramaic stretched "from India to Ethiopia/Nubia"

THE SHRINE OF THE BOOK, THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, JERUSALEM/© THE ISRAEL MUSEUM/BY ARDON BAR HAMA

THE LATEST DISCOVERED AND THE LONGEST DEAD SEA SCROLL. The Temple Scroll[a] (11Q19) was likely discovered in 1956 in Cave 11. The manuscript (two fragments above) is written in the square Herodian Hebrew script of the late Second Temple period. Measuring about 27 feet long, the scroll is written on very thin animal skin (no thicker than one-tenth of a millimeter), making it the thinnest of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The work claims to provide the details of God's instructions regarding the construction and operation of a temple that was never built, along with extensive regulations about sacrifices and temple practices.

(Esther 1:1) and of course included the Land of Israel. It is thus not surprising that many linguistic innovations attested for the first time in Restoration-period literature are the direct or indirect result of Aramaic influence, which is evident in all realms of the language—its vocabulary, grammar and syntax.

Determining whether a linguistic feature deviates from Standard Biblical Hebrew and belongs to Late (post-Classical) Hebrew may be illustrated by the following example: The word *iggeret* (אִגֶּרֶת), meaning a *letter*, appears in the Hebrew Bible 10 times, all in decisively late compositions (Esther, Nehemiah and Chronicles) that are unanimously dated to the Persian period (or later). This word is also widely used in Imperial Aramaic correspondence of Persia (i.e., texts contemporaneous with Late Biblical Hebrew). Moreover, the word is also documented in post-Biblical texts such as rabbinic Hebrew and the famous Bar Kokhba letters.

In the very late book of Esther (9:29), we read that Queen Esther "wrote a second letter (*iggeret*)" to the king. Similarly, in 1 Kings 21:11 we read that Naboth's townspeople did as Queen Jezebel had instructed them "in the letters she had sent them." However, the word used here is not *iggeret* (אִגֶּרֶת), which is totally unfamiliar to Standard Biblical Hebrew, but *sepher* (סֵפֶר), which is regularly employed in the Hebrew Bible to denote "letter."

Sepher is also used in this context in First Temple-period epigraphic sources—for example, in the letters excavated at Lachish and in texts from Ugarit. Furthermore, when the word *sepher*, meaning "letter," is translated in post-Classical times (in the Aramaic Targums and the Syriac Peshiṭta), the word used in the translations is *iggarta* (איגרתא)—the Aramaic equivalent of Hebrew *iggeret* (אִגֶּרֶת). We may therefore conclude that Persian texts and documents that were widely known in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah correspond well with the first appearance of *iggeret* in the Restoration period. Finally, it seems that the substitution of *iggeret* for *sepher* to refer to a letter may also be linked to an effort to find a specific term in Hebrew for the new word that would clearly mark the boundary between the meanings "letter" and "book" (a literary composition): *Sepher* means "book," and *iggeret* means "letter."

The use of *iggeret* is just one of many instances attesting to the fact that Biblical Hebrew was far from monolithic. The scope of its "archaisms," on the one hand, and its post-Classical "neologisms," on the other, prove unequivocally that the language was not frozen during its thousand-year history, but was subject to an ongoing process of modification. The small group of so-called "minimalists" claims that Biblical literature "was *written* more or less at one go, or at least over a relatively short period of time, so that the texts quite naturally do not reveal signs of significant historical differentiation."[2] However, this view is conclusively refuted by the evidence reviewed here and described at greater length in scholarly literature.[3] As demonstrated above, despite the mask of its apparent uniformity, we can still trace within Biblical Hebrew distinctive linguistic innovations that have left their mark on the historical development of the language. Such changes and modifications did not occur overnight, but were part of an ongoing dynamic process extending over quite a long time.

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[1] Although certain phenomena characteristic of the late period at times appear sporadically in earlier compositions, an outstanding accumulation of these features may be found only in the decisively late sources.

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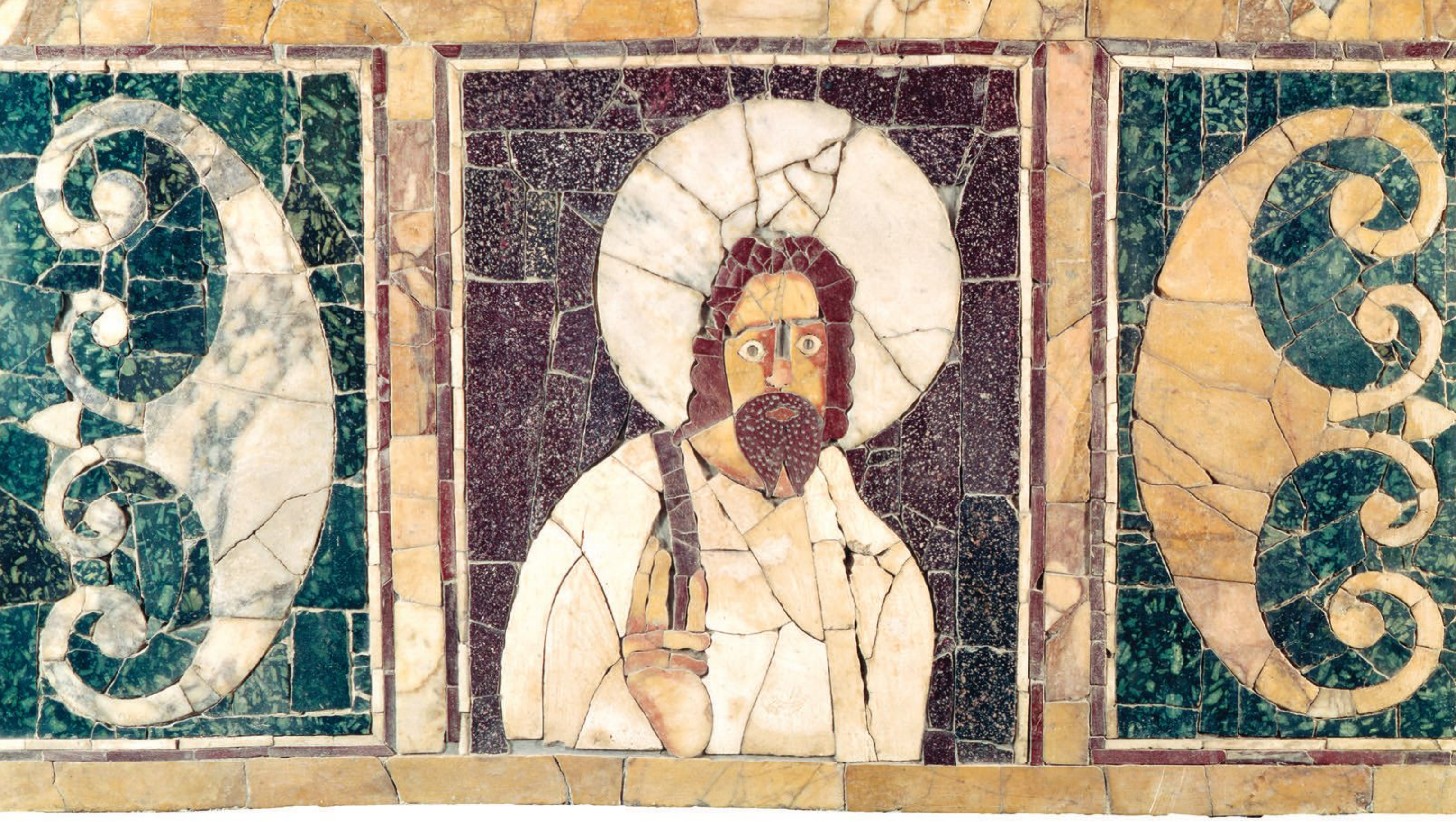

"Lost Gospels"—
Lost No More

Tony Burke

The New Testament, a 27-book collection of texts written within a century of Jesus' crucifixion, is typically thought of as the one-stop source for all information about the origins of Christianity and for the answers to pressing moral and ethical questions. But these texts were not automatically declared scripture after their writers had put down their pens. It took some time, centuries in fact, for Christians to determine which texts were important enough and popular enough to be added to the Jewish Tanakh as a reflection of the "new covenant" ushered in by Jesus.

By the time that decision was reached, Christianity had gone through a period of intense literary activity, leaving the church with an embarrassment of riches from which to choose their sacred texts.

THE NON-BIBLICAL JESUS. The Christian apocrypha (which means "secret," but came to be understood pejoratively as "false" or "spurious") depict many diverse images of Jesus and early Christian theology that are different from those found in the New Testament. Many of these texts were written to adapt the Jesus movement to the writer's particular context. This fourth-century opus sectile (stone inlay) floor mosaic of the head of Jesus from a building near Porta Marina, Ostia, Italy, is contemporary with many of the apocryphal gospels and reflects one artistic interpretation of Jesus.

SCALA / ART RESOURCE, NY

The considerable literature that did not make the cut constitutes the Christian apocrypha.

The word "apocrypha" means "secret," but by the end of the second century the term had taken on the pejorative meaning of "false" or "spurious." Christians were urged to avoid reading these rejected texts because, as bishop Athanasius of Alexandria wrote (c. 367 C.E.), they "are used to deceive the simple-minded." Once Athanasius and other church leaders decided on the official canon (meaning "standard" or "rule") of Christian scripture, the rejected texts were apparently "lost" for centuries until the beginning of the Renaissance, when scholars journeyed to the East in search of old manuscripts gathering dust in monastery libraries, and more recently by archaeologists, who pulled tattered scraps of papyrus out of tombs and ancient garbage dumps.

Today scholars of the Christian apocrypha are challenging this view of the loss and rediscovery of apocryphal texts. It has become increasingly clear that the Christian apocrypha were composed and transmitted throughout Christian history, not just in antiquity. And they were valued not only by "heretics" who held views about Christ that differed from normative (or "orthodox") Christianity, but also by writers within the church who did not hesitate to promote and even create apocryphal texts to serve their own interests.[1]

To some extent Christian apocrypha have been with us for as long as the texts of the New Testament. Ancient literature is difficult to date precisely, but arguments have been made, particularly by North American scholars, for dating some of the Christian apocrypha to the first century. Such is the case for several "lost" Jewish-Christian gospels—the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, the *Gospel of the Nazareans* and the *Gospel of the Ebionites*—known today only through quotations from these gospels made by early church writers such as Jerome and Origen. The *Gospel of Thomas*, a collection of sayings of Jesus, may have been assembled within a few decades of Jesus' death.

Other early apocrypha are preserved in part within the New Testament. The gospel that scholars refer to simply as Q is a hypothetical document that consists of sayings of Jesus, some of which have been included in the canonical texts of both Matthew and Luke.* However, Q itself was not accepted for inclusion in the New Testament canon. We know it only from common quotations in Matthew and Luke.

Canonical texts hint of other written sources, such as the "Signs Source" in the Gospel of John and the "Passion Narrative" incorporated into the Gospel of Mark.

By the mid-second century, the four Gospels now included in the New Testament had become widely accepted as authoritative. But many Christians

Betraying Judas

Originally looted from a tomb in Egypt, the Tchacos Codex containing the *Gospel of Judas* arose on the Egyptian antiquities market without much interest, probably because of the high asking price of three million dollars. During this period the codex spent 16 years in a Long Island bank vault. Eventually the Coptic papyrus came into the possession of Zurich antiquities dealer Frieda Tchacos Nussberger. She showed it to Yale Professor Bentley Layton, who identified one of the texts within it as the *Gospel of Judas*. Yale was too fearful of the legalities to purchase the codex, however.

At this point the National Geographic Society entered the drama as the financial backer. With the Maecenas Foundation of Ancient Art in Basel conserving the text and the National Geographic Society committed to publishing the critical edition, all should have been well for the *Gospel of Judas*. It wasn't.

In moves that reminded some scholars of the publication process of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the National Geographic Society under a veil of secrecy contracted three Gnosticism experts to prepare a critical edition of the text; all other scholars were denied access to the manuscript. Things got worse when the marketing strategy deployed for the critical edition "sold" the gospel as a possibly authentic historical account with a heroic Judas who was rewarded with ascension into the divine realm. The resulting publication was highly criticized for its translation and sensationalism.

Less than two years after the release of the first edition, National Geographic announced a substantially revised edition that responded to the plethora of scholarly criticism. Despite this controversy, the *Gospel of Judas* (a page depicted left) is still a significant apocryphal text for understanding Gnosticism.

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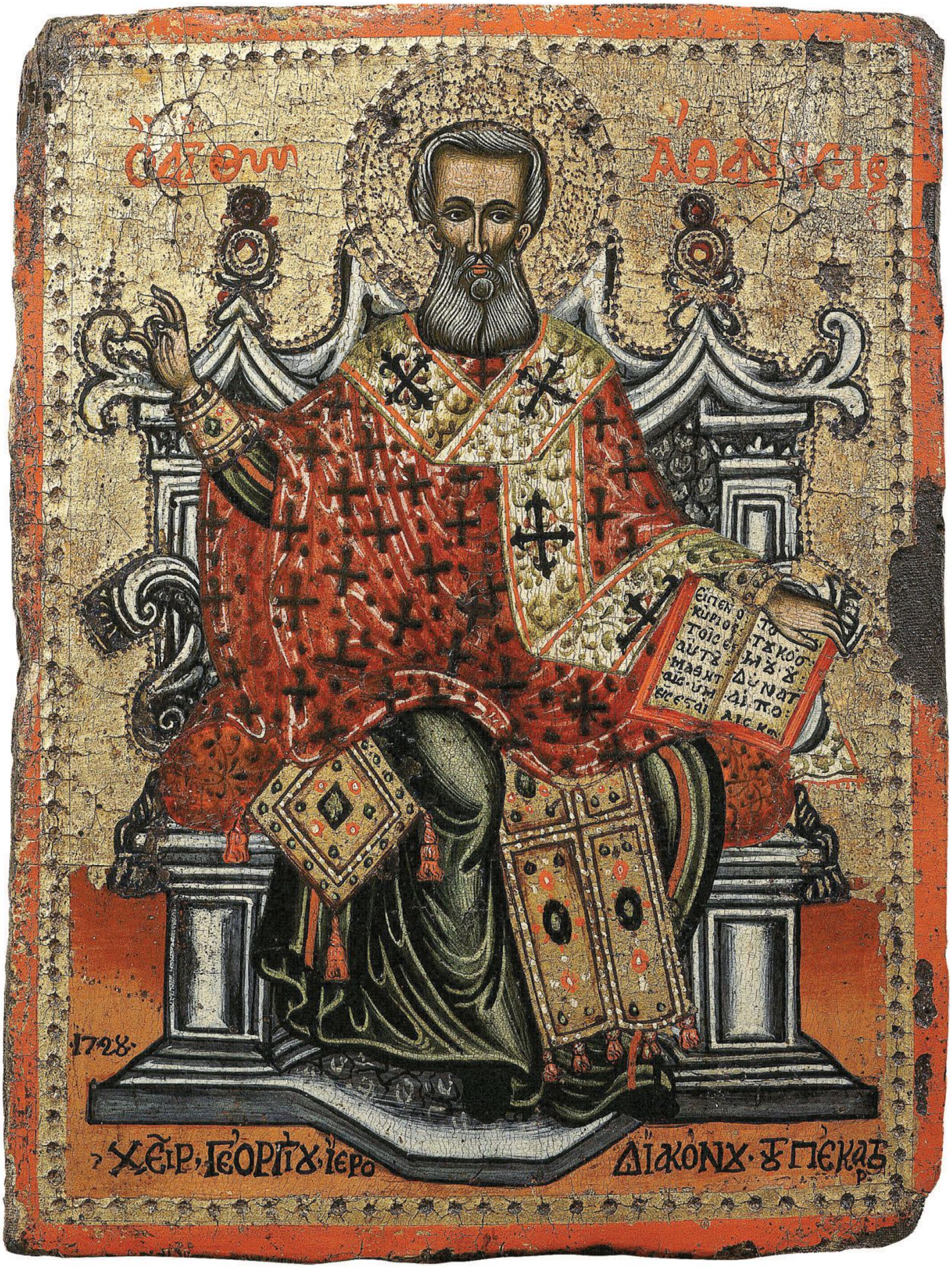
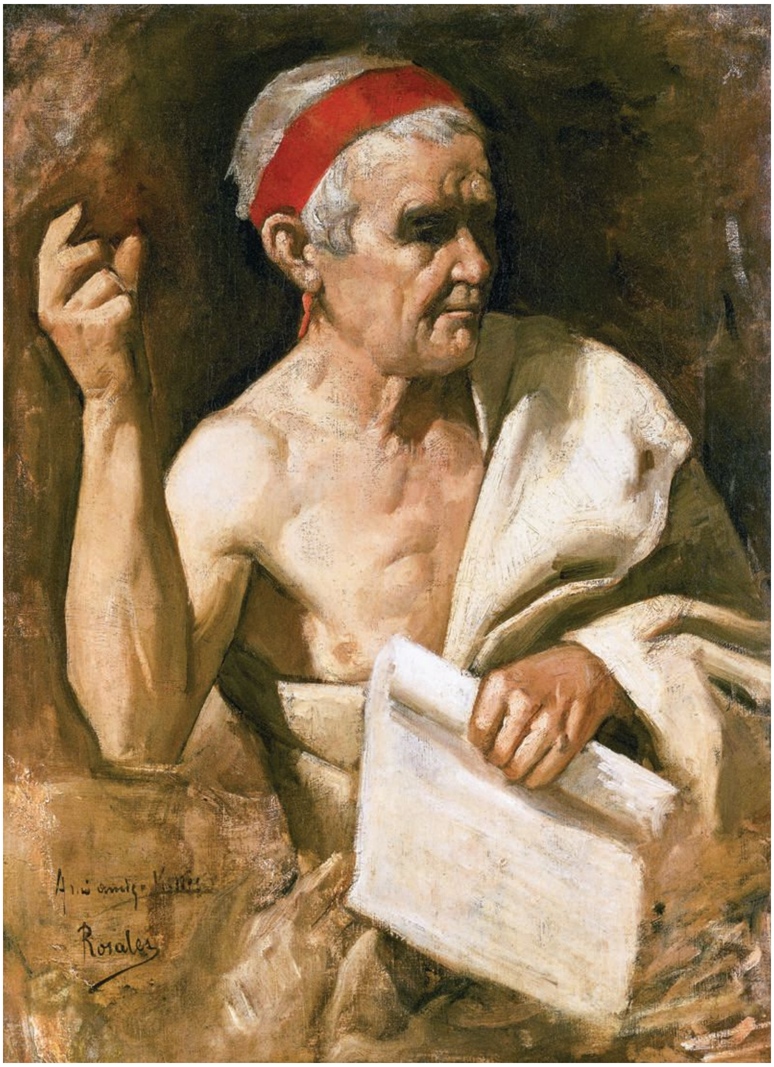
*See these articles regarding Q: Eta Linneman, "Is There a Gospel of Q?" *Bible Review*, August 1995; Stephen J. Patterson, "Yes Virginia, There Is a Q," *Bible Review*, October 1995.



GIANNI DAGLI ORTI / THE ART ARCHIVE AT ART RESOURCE, NY

DON'T BE DECEIVED and simple-minded was the message that Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria gave regarding the non-canonical gospels. In his annual Easter letter (39th Festal Letter, c. 367 C.E.), Athanasius lists the 27 standard books of the New Testament canon. This icon of Athanasius dates to 1728 C.E. and is part of the Roger Cabal Collection.



ALBUM / ART RESOURCE, NY

PAUL'S PEN PAL. One of the rediscovered apocryphal texts details a conversation between the Roman philosopher Seneca and the apostle Paul. The stoic statesman Seneca, famous for his works of philosophy and drama, is also known for being forced by Roman Emperor Nero to commit suicide. The famous Spanish *purismo* artist Eduardo Rosales's original painting of Seneca philosophizing is part of a private collection

considered them incomplete accounts of the life of Jesus. Gaps left by the gospel writers were filled in with such texts as the *Birth of Mary* (sometimes referred to as the *Protevangelium of James*), containing details of Mary's conception and birth, and the *Childhood of Jesus* (more commonly known as the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*), featuring stories of Jesus performing miracles between the ages of 5 and 12. Both of these texts were extremely popular throughout the Middle Ages and can be found in numerous manuscripts dating from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries.

Other texts recount teachings of the adult Jesus, sometimes in the form of dialogue gospels—such as the *Dialogue of the Savior* and the *Apocryphon of James*—in which Jesus appears to the apostles after the resurrection and instructs them about the origins of humanity and how to achieve salvation. These particular texts did not share the popularity of the childhood gospels; indeed, scholars did not even know they existed until recently, when fourth-century copies of the texts were found in Egypt.

Internal disagreements led to division within Christianity, with various groups coalescing around charismatic teachers, such as Valentinus (100–160 C.E.) and Marcion (85–160 C.E.). Texts became arenas of conflict between the groups; their followers composed new gospels in which early Christian figures outside of the 12 apostles vied with the other apostles over points of Christian teaching and practice. The *Gospel of Judas*, for example, portrays Judas alone as the one who understood who Jesus was and condemns the 12 for leading others astray.*

The variety was vast and included more than just gospels. Each apostle was featured in his own book of "acts" documenting his missionary efforts. And additional apocalypses and letters were composed. Paul is said to have written a third letter to the Corinthians, and there is a correspondence between Paul and the first-century Roman philosopher Seneca. There is even a correspondence between Jesus and a Syrian king named Abgar.

All of these texts (and more) circulated in the first three centuries after Jesus' crucifixion, some more widely than others, some achieving more esteem than others. But no formal decision could be made about which texts were to be considered authoritative for all Christians until after the emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E., allowing Christianity and other religions to be practiced freely throughout the empire. A consensus then emerged in the newly institutionalized church over which texts were to be included in their New Testament. The final shape of the canon was seemingly settled by 367 C.E. when Athanasius of Alexandria issued his annual letter for Easter. This 39th Festal Letter lists the 27 books of the New Testament as we have it today.[2]

It is often assumed that Athanasius's letter had a devastating effect on the Christian apocrypha. Those who valued the rejected texts either hid them away or destroyed them for fear of excommunication, or

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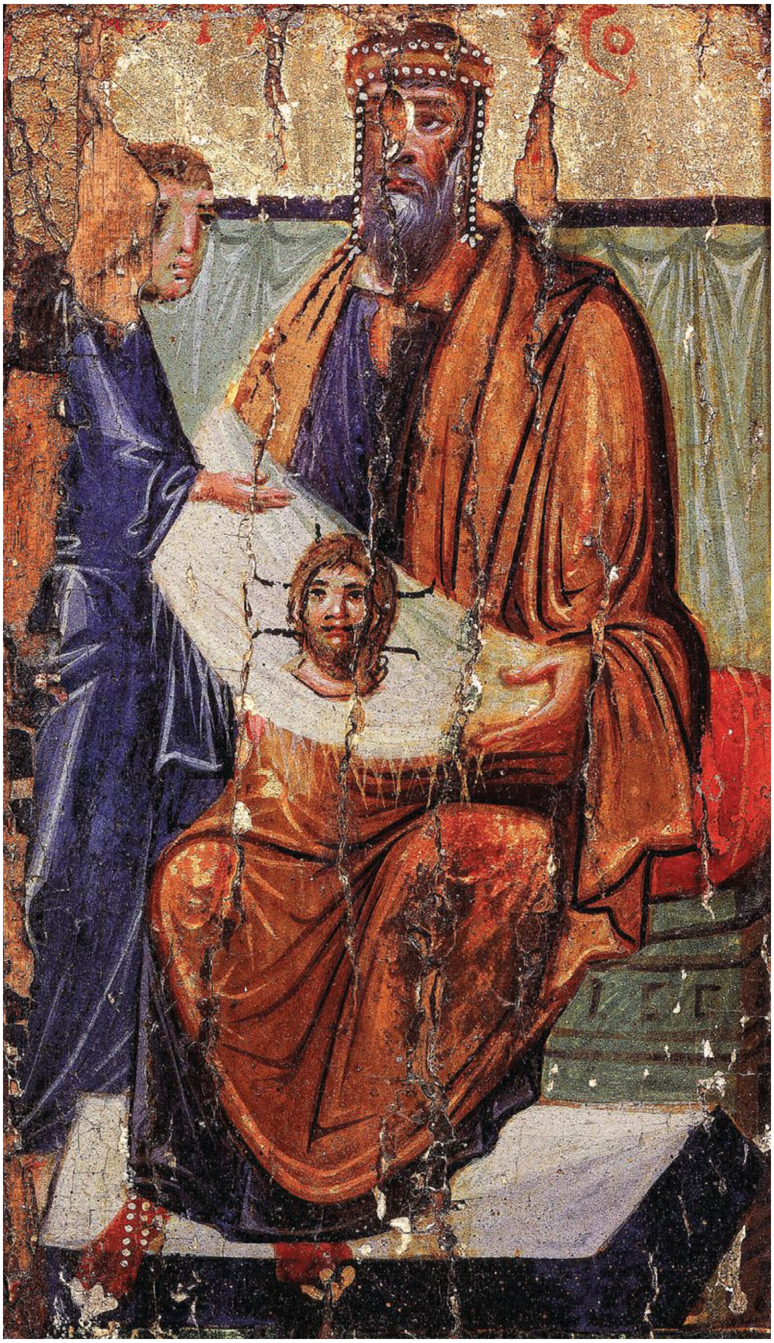
*Birger A. Pearson, "Judas Iscariot Among the Gnostics," **BAR**, May/June 2008.

MIRACLE AND MANDYLION. Known from Eusebius's *Church History*, the correspondence between Jesus and King Abgar recounts Abgar's petition for Jesus to heal him and Jesus' response that although he cannot come to him (because he has an appointment with crucifixion), he will send an apostle to heal Abgar because of his faith. The tradition goes on to state that the apostle Thaddeus was sent to Abgar after Jesus' ascension. An even later development stated that Thaddeus not only brought Abgar a letter from Jesus, but also his facial imprint, miraculously transferred to cloth. This cloth image became known as the Mandylion. Here (right) King Abgar holds the Mandylion after it has been presented by Thaddeus on an eighth-century panel painting from St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai (the site where Codex Sinaiticus was rediscovered by Constantine Tischendorf).



GIANNI DAGLI ORTI / THE ART ARCHIVE AT ART RESOURCE, NY

worse, execution. Thereafter Christians of all nations focused their attentions entirely upon the texts of the canon.

According to this prevailing view, the Christian apocrypha were lost to history until Renaissance scholars, enamored with literature from Greek and Roman antiquity, traveled to eastern lands and returned with manuscripts of long-lost texts, which they could now disseminate widely thanks to the recent invention of the printing press.

The best-known of these travelers is Constantine Tischendorf, the German scholar who recovered the Codex Sinaiticus from St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai.** Incidentally, Codex Sinaiticus includes two works that also did not become part of the New Testament canon: the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Manuscripts of other apocryphal texts were found at the monastery, and Tischendorf drew upon these manuscripts for his critical editions of Christian apocrypha, editions that remain influential to this day.

Scholars naturally prefer to work with manuscripts of the texts as close to their time of origin as possible. So you can imagine their delight in finding early manuscripts in archaeological excavations. In 1886–1887, a French archaeological team digging in a cemetery in Akhmîm in Upper Egypt excavated a portion of what appears to be the *Gospel of Peter*, which recounts the trial and crucifixion of Jesus using elements from the canonical gospels as well as some never-before-seen features, along with sections of the *Apocalypse of Peter* and the Jewish pseudepigraphon 1 Enoch.

This discovery was soon followed by excavations in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt. The Oxyrhynchus papyrus scraps included numerous Christian, Jewish and pagan texts.*** Three pages were found from three separate copies of the *Gospel of Thomas* dating from the late second to the third century. The *Thomas* fragments were by far the most dramatic find at Oxyrhynchus, but this ancient garbage dump also yielded fragments of several other apocryphal texts: the *Gospel of Mary*, the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Acts of*

Stanley E. Porter, "Hero or Thief? Constantine Tischendorf Turns Two Hundred," **BAR, September/October 2015; "Who Owns the Codex Sinaiticus?" **BAR**, November/December 2007.

***Stephen J. Patterson, "The Oxyrhynchus Papyri," **BAR**, March/April 2011.

SAVED IN SINAI. According to ancient Bible hunter Constantine Tischendorf, he saved the precious Codex Sinaiticus from ending up as fire kindling during a chance encounter at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai. His delight over discovering the manuscript raised the suspicions of the monks, but they allowed him to remove 43 pages of the codex for further study and return to Leipzig, Germany, with them. It took multiple petitions and several trips, but eventually Tischendorf, with the aid of the Russian government, was able to remove the majority of the manuscript, which made its way to Russia and was eventually sold to Britain. Great controversy surrounded the removal of the manuscript and Tischendorf's role in the process. Today parts of Codex Sinaiticus can be found in London, Leipzig, St. Catherine's Monastery (from a later secondary discovery) and Russia, but the complete manuscript has been placed in a virtual online museum. The significance of Codex Sinaiticus is manifold, but not least of which is the preservation of two apocryphal texts, the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*. The page on the left is one of the few that remain at the monastery in Egypt.

COURTESY OF ST. CATHERINE'S MONASTERY

John, the *Acts of Paul*, the *Acts of Peter* and several unidentified gospel narratives.[3]

Apocryphal works have also come into scholarly hands via the antiquities market. In 1954 the Bodmer Library in Geneva began publication of a horde of manuscripts from the third to fifth centuries, apparently discovered by peasants near the Egyptian town of Dishnâ and sold through middlemen to several European and American libraries.[4] Among the finds were a complete Greek copy of the *Birth of Mary* and portions of the *Acts of Paul* in Greek and Coptic.

Coptic is the language also of a number of other Egyptian discoveries originating, it would seem, from ancient Christian tombs.* These include the fifth-century Berlin Codex, containing a large portion of the *Gospel of Mary*, and the recently-published Tchacos Codex from c. 300, containing the one and only copy of the *Gospel of Judas* and several other texts.

The most famous discovery of Christian apocrypha is the Nag Hammadi Codices, a cache of over 50 texts discovered by Bedouin in 1945 in a mountainous area dotted with caves near the town of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt.** The 13 codices contain 14 apocryphal texts, including a complete copy of the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Philip* and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, as well as dialogues, acts, letters and apocalypses.

The Nag Hammadi Library was a goldmine of apocryphal literature that, to some scholars, redrew the history of Christianity.[5] It has become increasingly clear that Christianity began as a multitude of voices, each one declaring itself right and others wrong. One, led by the Roman Church, emerged as the victor. It was the Roman Church that determined the canon of the New Testament, effectively silencing contrary beliefs and casting itself as the true heir to the teachings of Jesus.

This revision of Christian history understood the Nag Hammadi Codices, and other manuscripts of apocrypha, as hidden away in order to safeguard them from confiscation by church officials looking to root out heresy. The Christian apocrypha were thus "lost" for over a thousand years. But scholars in the field are now challenging this narrative and demonstrating that the "lost gospels" were not so lost after all.[6]

First, the shape of the 27-book New Testament canon was not settled in the fourth century after all. The Bible took on different shapes in parts of the world outside of Roman influence. The Eastern Orthodox Church, centered originally in Constantinople, separated from Rome in the fifth century. Their New Testament did not include Revelation until the 10th century. Farther east, the Syrian Orthodox Church, established in 451 C.E., until recently read from a New Testament that lacked five of the 27 texts (those still debated in the fourth

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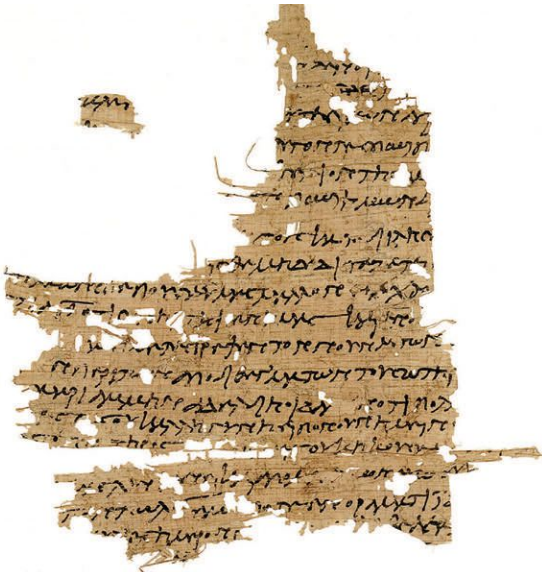
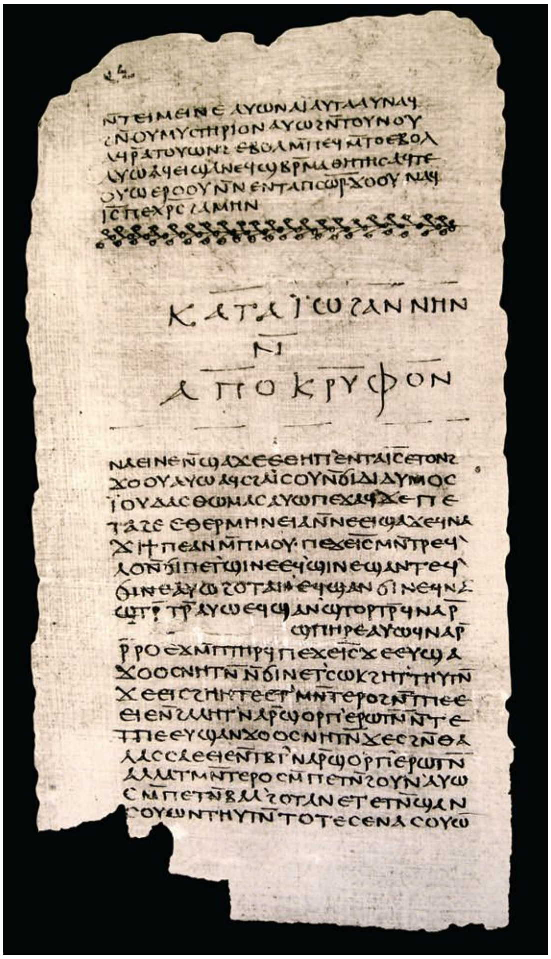
*Leo Depuydt, "Coptic: Egypt's Christian Language," **BAR**, November/December 2015.

Charles W. Hedrick, "Liberator of the Nag Hammadi Codices," **BAR, July/August 2016.



ONE PERSON'S TRASH is another person's amazing archaeological discovery. While excavating a garbage dump in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, archaeologists discovered a cache of apocryphal texts, including three partial copies of the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Mary* (depicted above), the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Acts of John*, the *Acts of Paul*, the *Acts of Peter* and other as-yet-unidentified gospels.



ZEV RADOVAN/BIBLELANDPICTURES.COM

DISCOVERED NEAR NAG HAMMADI, Egypt, in 1945, the codices equaled a treasure trove of apocryphal literature. Over 50 texts were uncovered, from dialogues to letters to apocalypses. One of the most significant finds was a complete copy of the *Gospel of Thomas*, a page of which is depicted above.

century: 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and Revelation) and once included 3 Corinthians. So enamored was Syrian Christianity with apocryphal texts that monasteries throughout Turkey and Iraq have become a major source for manuscripts of Christian apocrypha.

Still farther east, the Bible of the Armenian Church included 3 Corinthians and the *Martyrdom of John*. And the Bible of the Ethiopian Church today includes not only additional Old Testament texts, including Enoch and Jubilees, but a New Testament canon with several texts related to church organization and practice along with the *Book of the Covenant*, the *Book of the Rolls* and others.

In sum, what constitutes the canon of the New Testament has varied over time and space. The line between canonical and non-canonical texts has often been blurry, and texts we believed "lost" were not lost to everyone.

Second, even after efforts to settle the New Testament canon in the fourth century, writers in the church continued to create entirely new apocryphal texts. After Constantine's triumph, the once-outlawed religion now had to construct churches, inaugurate festivals and enshrine its heroes. From its beginnings, Christianity was a religion of texts, of story, and in this new environment they used story again for "inventing" Christianity.[7] New apocryphal acts were written, such as the *Acts of the Centurion Cornelius* and the *Acts of Titus*,[8] each telling the life of the saint using a combination of canonical and non-canonical traditions and ending with a story of the discovery and internment of the saint's relics in his or her very own church.

The Coptic Church was particularly effective in composing such texts. A veritable cottage-industry of writings—known in scholarship as "pseudo-apostolic memoirs"—were created to institute feast days for early Christian saints.[9]

The Western Church worked at compiling and translating Greek texts for Latin readers, such as the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, which combines the birth of Mary with additional stories of the holy family in Egypt, and the Greek *Acts of Pilate*, which was

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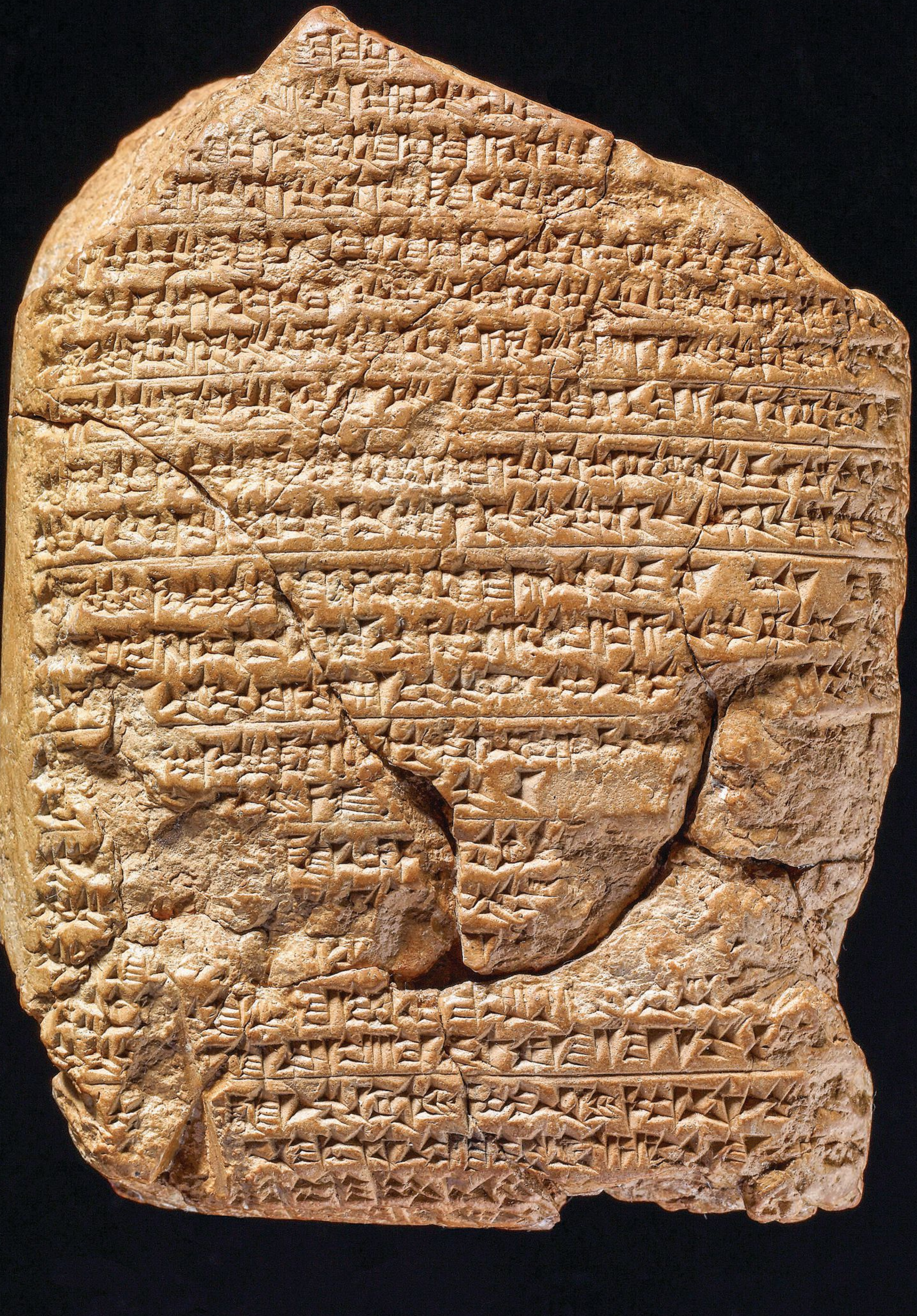

How Bad Was the Babylonian Exile?

Laurie E. Pearce

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, sat and wept, as we thought of Zion.
There on the poplars we hung up our lyres."
PSALM 137:1–2 [JPS]

While the words of the psalmist capture the longing of some Judeans to return from the Babylonian Exile, the prophet Jeremiah exhorted Judah's exiles to build houses, plant gardens, marry and have families—to engage in activities that would assure the stability and continuity of life and community in a foreign land (Jeremiah 29:5–7).

Recently published cuneiform tablets reveal fascinating aspects of Judean life under Babylonian and Persian rule.[1] Written by Babylonian and Babylonian-writing scribes in service to the imperial administration, these sources inform our understanding of the social and economic standing of Judeans in the Mesopotamian landscape.

Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 B.C.E., but the Judean Exile had already begun as early as 597 B.C.E., with the removal to Babylon of Judahite king Jehoiachin, his mother, sons and "mighty men of valor, 10,000 captives and all the craftsmen and the smiths" (2 Kings 24:12, 15–16). The Biblical text continues, recording the

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S EARLY YEARS are detailed in this cuneiform tablet, part of the Babylonian Chronicle (opposite). The tablet covers events between 605 and 594 B.C.E. Each entry recounts military events in successive regnal years of the Babylonian kings. Horizontal lines separate the events by year. The fifth section of this tablet documents the conquest of Jerusalem and Judah and corroborates the Biblical account of Judahite royalty being taken into exile (2 Kings 25:30; Jeremiah 52:31–34).

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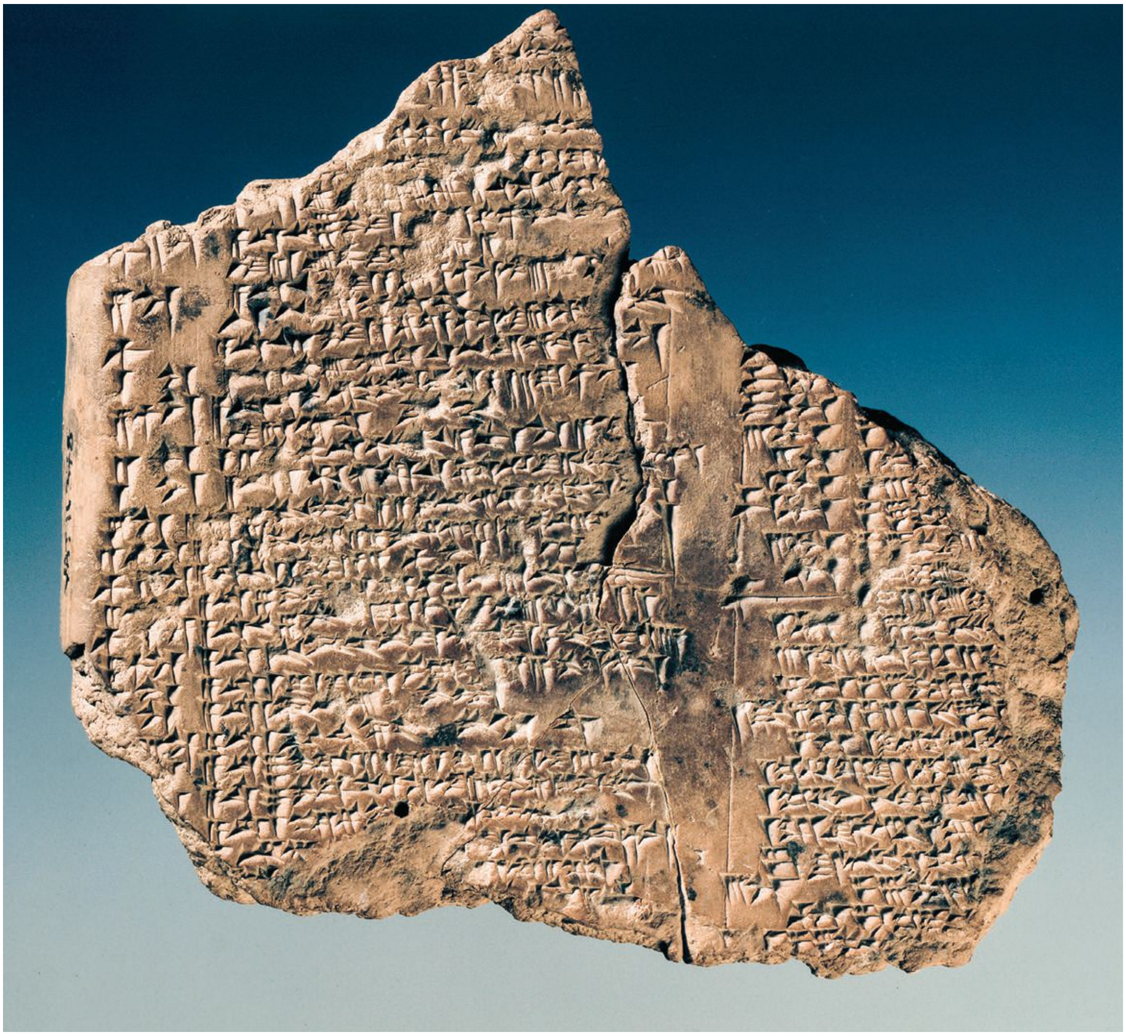

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ENOUGH FOR ALL. This cuneiform ration list from the South Palace in Babylon is one of several confirming that Judean exiles were provided for in their captivity. The clay tablet, which measures 3.5 by 4 inches, dates between 595 and 570 B.C.E.

cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem, the burning of the "house of the Lord, the king's palace and all the houses of Jerusalem" (2 Kings 25:9), and the subsequent removal of the population, along with the Temple furnishings and treasury. Jeremiah notes the dates of three subsequent waves of deportation, along with the numbers of people exiled in each: In Nebuchadnezzar's 7th, 18th and 23rd years (597, 586, 582 B.C.E.), he deported 3,023, 832 and 745 people, respectively (Jeremiah 52:28–30).

The brief Babylonian record of the conquest of Jerusalem and Judah is narrated in the Babylonian Chronicle of the Early Years of Nebuchadnezzar, now housed in the British Museum, which acquired it in 1896: "The seventh year: In the month Kislev, the king of Akkad [i.e., Nebuchadnezzar] mustered his army and ... encamped against the city of Judah, and on the second day of the month Adar he captured the city (and) seized (its) king. A king of his own choice he appointed in the city, (and) taking the vast tribute he brought it into Babylon."[2]

Both cuneiform and Biblical evidence thus corroborate that members of the Judahite court were exiled to Babylon and contribute to an understanding of their status there. The Bible tells us that Evil-Merodach (Babylonian Amēl-Marduk), son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, released King Jehoiachin from prison, elevated him above other captive kings, and provided him with a daily food allowance (2 Kings 25:30; Jeremiah 52:31–34). This Biblical notice finds support in cuneiform ration lists excavated in Nebuchadnezzar's South Palace, not far from Babylon's famed Ishtar Gate.[3] These texts preserve the names and titles of Levantine kings and high officials deported along with Jehoiachin. The ration texts confirm the diverse origins of deportee populations; Judeans as well as Egyptians, Philistines, Elamites, Lydians, Ionians, Medes and Persians received monthly disbursements of grain and oil. This admixture of nations is also reflected in the eight-sided clay prism known as the *Hofkalender*, or (imprecisely as the) Court Calendar, which lists the many provincial and imperial officials obligated to provide financial and material support for Nebuchadnezzar's restoration of the Old (or South) Palace in Babylon, in which the aforementioned ration texts were preserved.

A small receipt in the archives from Sippar, now in the British Museum, confirms delivery of 1.5 mina of gold, owed by a certain Nabû-šarrūssu-ukīn to the temple of Marduk. This transaction occurred in 594 B.C.E., soon after Jehoiachin's deportation from Jerusalem. This Nabû-šarrūssu-ukīn can be identified with Nebosarsekim (נבו שרסכים), whose presence, along with "all the princes of the king of Babylon" (Jeremiah 39:3, 13) at the siege of Jerusalem is established with minor emendation of the difficult Biblical text.[4] *Rab sārîs,* the title that Nebosarsekim bears, places him at the upper levels of the Babylonian administration, and, thus, this text from Sippar provides one confirmed identification in the cuneiform record of a named figure, apart from the king, present at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Outside courtly circles, the lives of ordinary Judeans in Babylonia were documented in some 700 texts excavated at Nippur in the late 1800s.[5] They record the activities of a family of businessmen, descendants of an entrepreneur named Murašû. Through assembly, sublease and, sometimes, foreclosure of parcels of land, members of the family profited from barley and date agriculture.

In the family contracts, Judeans appear primarily as witnesses in the Murašû texts. Witnesses typically belong to the same social circle as the transactions' principals, so we can conclude that some Judeans (the witnesses) had achieved economic standing on par with the Murašû family. The mid-fifth-century B.C.E. date of the Murašû texts means that those Judeans belonged not to the Exilic generation, but rather to the period of Temple building that occurred under Ezra and Nehemiah's direction back in Judah after their return.

The Judeans are identified in these, as well as other cuneiform texts, on the basis of their Yahwistic names (i.e., names constructed with a form of the

GOLD FOR THE TEMPLE OF MARDUK. This small receipt from Sippar reports that Nabû-šarrūssu-ukīn (Nebosarsekim in the Bible) delivered 1.5 mina of gold to Marduk's temple in 594 B.C.E. Nebosarsekim, according to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 39:3, 13), was present among "all the princes of the king of Babylon" during the siege of Jerusalem.

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The Cyrus Cylinder—Political Propaganda

In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, when the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah was fulfilled, the Lord roused the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia to issue a proclamation throughout his realm by word of mouth and in writing … "Anyone of you of all His people … let him go up to Jerusalem that is in Judah and build the House of the Lord God of Israel." (Ezra 1:2–3, JPS)

The famous Cyrus Cylinder (above), a clay barrel-shaped cuneiform cylinder found in Babylon in 1879 and now in the British Museum, details the Persian king's entry into Babylon, his conquest of the city in 539 B.C.E. and his defeat of Nabonidus, the last native Babylonian king. This began the Achaemenid era, which lasted until Alexander the Great defeated Darius in 331 B.C.E. The text of the Cyrus Cylinder is often taken as confirmation of the quotation from Ezra above. It is, however, political propaganda.

The text is a response to some of the actions of Nabonidus. For 10 years, he had stayed in the Arabian city Teima, precluding the observation of the New Year's rituals that required the king's presence in Babylon. According to the text, Marduk, chief deity of Babylon, named Cyrus as a righteous and worthy heir to the crown. Cyrus marched against Babylon, and the irreverent Nabonidus was handed over; Babylon capitulated without a fight.

In the lofty style and first-person voice of such royal inscriptions, Cyrus acknowledges Marduk's beneficence by restoring neglected temples and returning various gods to their sanctuaries.

Although no mention is made of the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem, this text may have inspired Ezra's claim that Cyrus authorized the Judeans' return and rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple. However, the cylinder mentions only the restoration of cities in Babylonia, mostly near Cyrus's ancestral home.

In modern times, the cylinder's propaganda value was again made evident when, in the 1971 celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Achaemenid era, the Shah of Iran termed the cylinder the world's first charter for human rights.**—L.E.P.**

Israelite divine name YHWH). Yahwistic names identify Judeans across the Babylonian landscape from the earliest days of the Exile.

In the city of Susa (Biblical Shushan, the setting of the Book of Esther), cuneiform texts dating to 494–493 B.C.E. record the presence of Judeans with Yahwistic names in the roles of royal courtiers and as children of royal courtiers. These texts record loans of silver exchanged between different members of prominent Babylonian families on their visits to Susa, trips that may have been made for the purpose of an audience with the king. Thus, we know that the Judeans interacted, in specific, limited ways, with members of the Babylonian economic elite.

In Sippar, on the Euphrates River north of Babylon, a small number of Judeans with Yahwistic names appear with the designation "royal merchants." These individuals belonged primarily to one family, in which there is otherwise widespread use of Babylonian names among its members. The most striking example is a Babylonian name attested in a marriage document of a daughter of a Judean royal merchant; her name Kaššaya is the same as one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters. The social designation and the use of Babylonian names attest to this family's acculturation and adaptation to life in Babylonia.

A settlement called "Judahtown" (Babylonian āl-Yāḫūdu) was unknown until the 1999 publication of a single administrative text* written there in 498 B.C.E.[6] Since then a group of 44 administrative and legal documents written in āl-Yāḫūdu has been identified and published.[7] These texts, along with approximately 160 texts written in nearby towns, provide balance to the known documentation, now attesting to the lives of the lowly as well as high-born Judean and other West Semitic exiles, in rural as well as the previously documented urban landscapes, from the start of the Judean Exile to the time of the rebuilding of the Temple and beyond.

Two texts in the corpus, earlier than the first published Judahtown text, preserve a writing of the town's name as ālu ša Yāḫūdu, "the city of the Judeans," written in cuneiform as URU šá $^{\text{lú}}$ia-a-ḫu-da-a-a.[8] This toponym thus confirms that Judeans were the primary inhabitants of that settlement; it is but one of several that reflect the demographic profile of towns Nebuchadnezzar established in old and abandoned, or in newly created, settlements in the countryside, particularly in the area around Nippur,[9] populated primarily with deportees from defeated lands. The new residents worked to reclaim these lands, and in exchange for their access to the land, owed military service and taxes to the state. The system served not only to extend the state's control of agriculture, but also to integrate and acculturate foreign populations into the empire.

The dates of these earliest texts from āl-Yāḫūdu mean that there is now a nearly seamless continuum in documentation of Judean presence that extends from the destruction of Jerusalem through the early

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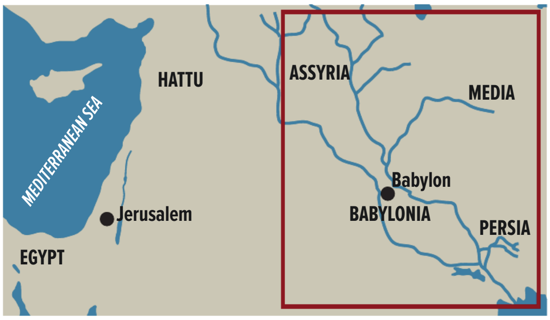
*André Lemaire, "The Universal God," **BAR**, November/December 2005.



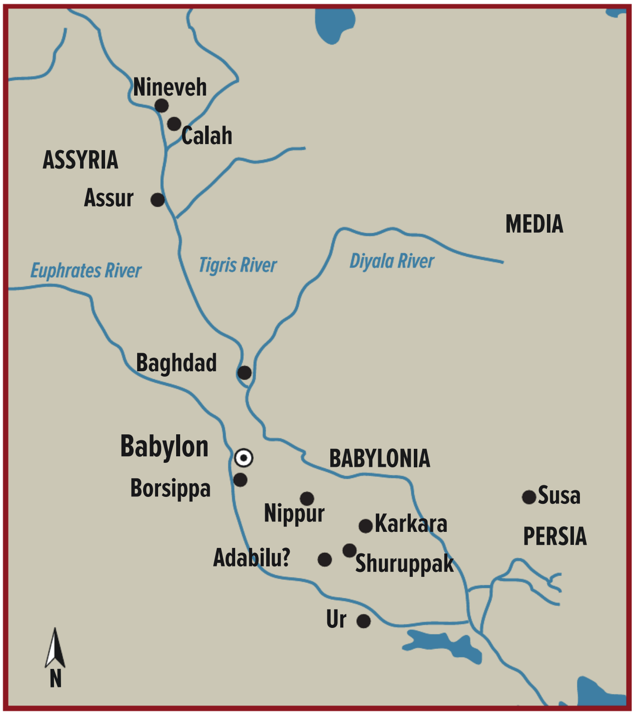
part of the reign of the Persian king Xerxes (the latest text in the corpus dates to 477 B.C.E.).

Near āl-Yāḫūdu lay other towns named for other individuals of West Semitic origin, for example: Bīt-Našar (the estate of Našar) and Bīt-Abī-râm (the estate of Abī-râm). The town of Nār-Kabara (the town of river Kabara) is of special interest, as the component Kabara parallels the name of the river Chebar, a place from which Ezekiel began to prophesy to his fellow captives, and which figures prominently in the Biblical book that bears his name: Ezekiel 1:1–3; 3:15, 22; 10:15, 20, 22; 43:3. On the Babylonian landscape, Nār-Kabara refers to a waterway extending through rural Babylonia to Susa, along which commerce was transacted.

Judeans of āl-Yāḫūdu inhabited the countryside and participated in the activities and business of agriculture. The record of the Judeans at āl-Yāḫūdu corroborates the depiction of Jeremiah's words: "Build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there, do not be decreased. And seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to the Lord in its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper" (Jeremiah 29:5–7, JPS).

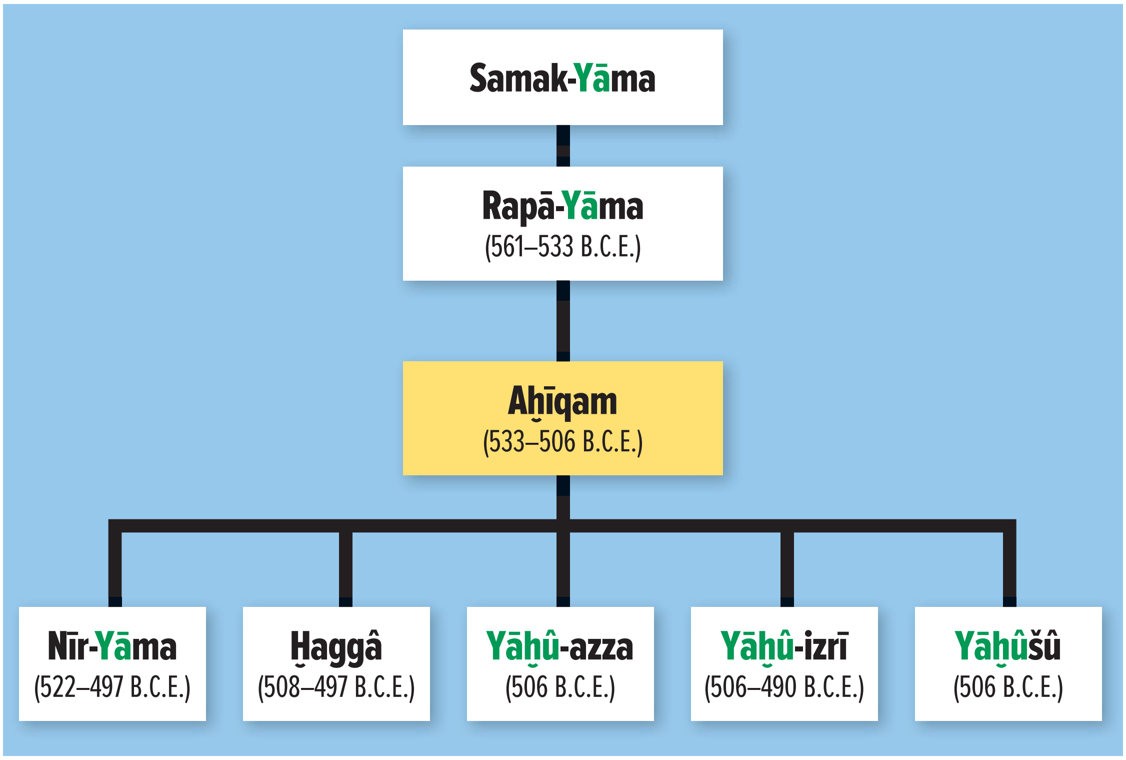
The continuity and success of the Judean community is apparent in the records of five generations of one family living in āl-Yāḫūdu. The contracts in which Aḫīqam is the central figure show him, his father, Rapā-Yāma, and his sons to have been involved in rentals of land and date gardens, deliveries of grain and dates, collection of taxes and the acquisition of cattle for a plow team for efficient cultivation; marriage and death of family members are also referenced. Although Aḫīqam's name is West Semitic, but not positively identifiable as Judean, his father and several sons bear Yahwistic names identifying them as of Judean descent.

Samak-Yāma, Rapā-Yāma's father, never appears as an active participant in the āl-Yāḫūdu texts, but he is mentioned in five texts dating from 561 to 533 B.C.E. This chronology suggests that Samak-Yāma was born either in Judah or in Babylonia shortly after the deportation. His son, Rapā-Yāma, is primarily occupied with deliveries under the management of royal officials. Rapā-Yāma's obligation to deliver barley on the estate of the *rab mūgi*, the Babylonian official known in Hebrew as *rab mag* in Jeremiah (Jeremiah 39:3, 13), illustrates the early interaction of Judeans with Babylonian administrators and administrative practices.



Documentation of Rapā-Yāma's activity ends following 532 B.C.E., at which time his son, Aḫīqam, succeeds him in business and assumes his father's role, even repaying some small debts remaining at the time of his father's death. Some of these texts post-date the first year of Cyrus's rule, when Cyrus (according to the narrative in Ezra 1:1–3) issued the proclamation that authorized Judeans to return and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.[10]

Aḫīqam's business activities presented risk as well as potential for profit, as is evident in his contribution to a joint venture to build a plow team. Against the considerable expense of bringing together two oxen, two farmers, as well as the seeder plow and seed necessary for efficient and intensive grain agriculture, Aḫīqam and his partner also stood to share in the profits. Aḫīqam's business acumen is seen in his exchange of a donkey mare for an ox and the payment in silver made to compensate for the differential value between the animals; the expense



LAURIE E. PEARCE

IT'S A FAMILY THING. Aḫīqam is the central figure in a cache of 44 records from Judahtown (āl-Yāḫūdu) that mentions several generations of his family. The Yahwistic names of his father and grandfather point to their Judean heritage. The records mentioning his sons reflect the successes of the Judean community in exile. Here the male lineage of this family is presented with the dates for which each family member's activity is attested.

incurred contributed to Aḫīqam's building a stock of animals that could be leased in future profit-making ventures. All of these mark him as an entrepreneur, interacting with the Babylonian population in and around āl-Yāḫūdu.

Small details suggest that Aḫīqam achieved a modicum of standing in the Babylonian economy. Some debts owed to him are repaid in "the measure of Aḫīqam." It was common practice for a significant landholder to collect payments of commodities in a standard 6-liter measuring utensil marked with his name, an external indication of his authority. Records of business transactions between Aḫīqam and Banā-Yāma son of Abdi-Yāḫû (their Yahwistic names demonstrate the two written forms of the name of the Judean deity) indicate a network of relationships between members of the Judean community at Judahtown. Both men were landholders and sufficiently prominent to require repayment in their named measuring vessels; their comparable status shows that the lands at and around Judahtown could and did sustain agriculture beyond meager levels. The size of one of Aḫīqam's obligations due to royal officials, four minas of silver, far exceeds the productivity of local agricultural activity. This, together with evidence of his connections with individuals outside the immediate area of āl-Yāḫūdu, and with members outside of the Judean community, establish that the scope of the family business expanded well beyond that evident in documentation of his father's transactions. Aḫīqam continued to be active until 507 B.C.E.; documentation written in 504 B.C.E., following his death, substantiates his entrepreneurial success. On his death, his assets were divided among five known sons.

Aḫīqam's family is representative of a pattern that must have been repeated many times and which may well have contributed to the continuity of the Jewish community that, generations later, produced the Babylonian Talmud. Although the evidence for Judeans on the Babylonian landscape, from the time of the Exile through the Persian period, remains scattered over time and topography, the cuneiform sources substantiate many of the brief notices preserved in the Bible. ◼

[1] Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer*, CUSAS 28 (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2014).

CONTINUES ON PAGE 64

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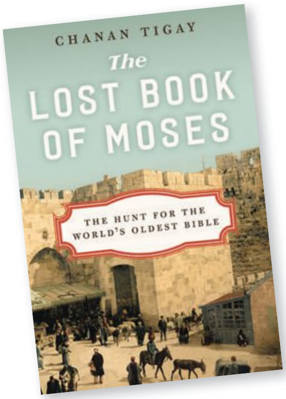

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Unraveling the Truth: Alleged Forgery and the "Oldest Bible"

The Lost Book of Moses:
The Hunt for the World's Oldest Bible
by Chanan Tigay
(New York: Ecco/Harper Collins, 2016), 352 pp., $27.99 (Hardcover)

Reviewed by Rehav (Buni) Rubin

In the second half of the 19th century, the Middle East became an arena of vigorous competition among the European powers over strategic positions in the declining Ottoman Empire. Eretz-Israel/Palestine, being the land of the Bible and the cradle of Judeo-Christian civilization, served as a central part of this arena, and Jerusalem was its focus. There, pilgrims and missionaries, consuls and archaeologists struggled over a foothold in the holy places and over archaeological objects that were sent to museums in European capitals.

In 1856 Moses Shapira, a Polish-born Jew and a recent convert to Christianity, arrived in Jerusalem and joined the Anglican community of Jewish converts at Christ Church, near Jaffa Gate. By 1860 he became Moses Wilhelm Shapira, a Protestant, a Prussian citizen, husband of Rosette, father of two daughters and owner of a book and antiquity shop, which was described in a Baedeker guidebook as the best in Jerusalem. This shop soon became a popular destination for the many scholars and tourists who visited Jerusalem.

Shapira became famous when he sold about 2,000 items—figurines and pottery vessels bearing Moabite inscriptions—to Berlin's Altes Museum. Unfortunately, the items were soon recognized as forgeries. Years later, having restored his reputation with great effort, he offered the British Museum several scrolls written in early Hebrew script for a million pounds, claiming that they were an early version of Deuteronomy—allegedly from the time of Moses. These manuscripts drew much international attention, but after a thorough examination they also were identified as forgeries, and in 1884 Shapira committed suicide at a hotel in Rotterdam.

The story of Shapira and his manuscripts is famous and has been told and recounted over time by his daughter Myriam Harry (French journalist and writer), Shulamit Lapid (Israeli novelist), John Marco Allegro (English archaeologist and scholar) and Yoram Sabo (Israeli filmmaker), among others.

Author Chanan Tigay originally went on a quest to find Shapira's lost scrolls, traveling to seven countries and four continents. When starting this journey, Tigay thought that perhaps the lost scrolls were not forged after all. This idea grew from Shapira's claim that his scrolls came from near the Dead Sea; eerily similar Dead Sea Scrolls were found near the Dead Sea in 1947.

This well-written book allows readers to take part in Tigay's adventures all the way to their surprising end. Tigay, however, goes beyond telling the story of the scrolls. As a great storyteller, he succeeds in integrating three different circles in perfect harmony. In the first circle stands Shapira, his life, business and family. Through the book Shapira becomes a close acquaintance, and the readers follow him in his rise and decline.

In the second circle, Tigay skillfully describes Jerusalem of that time, depicting the European community, missionaries, scholars, pilgrims and travelers, on one hand, and the Arab population of the city and the Bedouin of Moab and the desert, on the other. Moreover, he tells the story of the beginning of archaeology in the Holy Land, carried out by people who held a Bible in one hand and a spade in the other—often acting not only as scientists, but as delegates of rival countries.

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When the priests confirm his interpretations of the Scriptures, young Jesus is convinced that God has chosen *him* to become the Christ. This is why he calls the Holy Temple, earthly home of the Hebrew God, "his father's house." [LK 2:49]

As he grows to manhood, he prepares to fulfill the ancient Scriptural prophecies of the Christ.

His mission is to warn the people to repent before the apocalyptic Kingdom of Heaven arrives. [MK 1:14]

He begins his public ministry by touring the towns of Galilee, performing "miracles" that are really *signs* pointing to his hidden identity as the Christ.

Using the power of faith, he heals those who are sick in body and mind, and he attracts a devoted following.

But at the height of his popularity, he abruptly ends his public ministry and travels South to Jerusalem.

Why? Because he plans to redeem the sins of the human race by fulfilling the prophecy that the Christ would be "pierced." [ZECH 12:10]

Since religious sacrifices can only be accomplished in the Holy City, this is where he must go.

He "cleanses" (occupies) the Holy Temple, and the Romans crucify him on Friday, April 3, 33 A.D.

Did Jesus somehow survive the cross? Is that how he "rose from the dead"? No, it is not.

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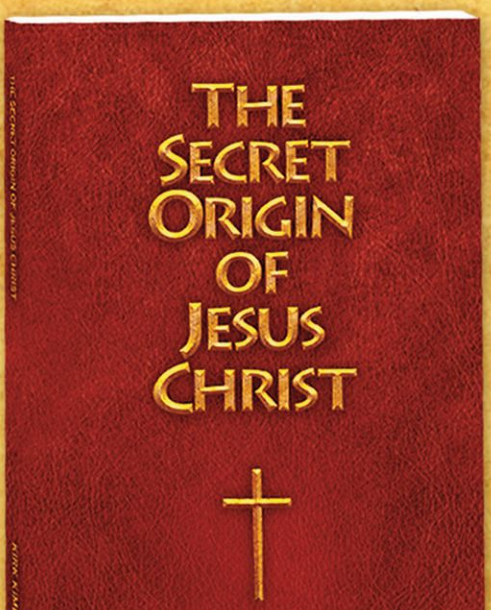
THE SECRET ORIGIN OF JESUS CHRIST
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in Germany, Britain and France with the development of the "documentary hypothesis" in Biblical studies. The author emphasizes the connection between growing Bible scholarship and interest in archaeology, noting especially the inscriptions and manuscripts that could have been topics for discussion.

The third circle is Tigay's globetrotting hunt to famous cities and remote sites via airplanes, trains, cars and on foot. Not less important is Tigay's personal quest for answers originating not only due to his fascination with the leading figure of a 19th-century enigma, but also because Tigay is the son of a renowned Biblical scholar whose life's work was on the study of Deuteronomy.

This multi-layered journey is very well told right down to the minute details: from Jerusalem to the River Arnon in Jordan, to the back rooms of the British Museum, to the Louvre in Paris and to the museum in Berlin; from a small town in northern England, to the police station in Rotterdam, to the private study of an Australian scholar and elsewhere.

By the end of this long voyage, after having read century-old catalogs of book-dealers and cooperating and competing with other "Shapira-maniacs," Tigay found the surprising answer in the least expected place—but that is for the readers to find out.

A native of Israel, Rehav (Buni) Rubin is a professor in the Geography Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of more than 70 articles and books, including Image and Reality: Jerusalem in Maps and Views *(Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1999).*

STRATA ANSWERS

What Is It? (from p. 12)

Answer: (D) Scale weight

This cylindrical scale weight came from Jerusalem. It was uncovered during the Jewish Quarter Excavations, led by Professor Nahman Avigad from 1969 to 1982. The weight dates to the late Second Temple period (Early Roman period).

An essential part of ancient economies, scale weights were used to measure the weight of goods. The weight would be placed on one side of the scale, and on the other side would be the merchandise. Having standardized weights and measures ensured that both the buyer and seller of merchandise were being treated fairly—and not cheated. Numerous times the Bible instructs people to use honest weights and measures (see, e.g., Leviticus 19:36) and warns against dishonest gain. The authorities created a standardized system by setting specific measures that were universally recognized among their constituents.

In his new book, Ronny Reich analyzes 598 late Second Temple period weights from the Kingdom of Judah.[1] The weights were found at 28 different excavations—the vast majority coming from Jerusalem. The weights come in different shapes and sizes, but their purpose was the same: to guarantee a standardized monetary system.

[1] Ronny Reich, *Stone Scale-Weights of the Late Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2015).

How Many? (from p. 16)

Answer: Three

For three years, the prophet Isaiah ministered naked and barefoot (Isaiah 20:3). According to the Book of Isaiah, this was a parallel for the future captivity of the Egyptians and Ethiopians (Cushites) at the hands of the Assyrians. The Israelites had placed their faith in Egypt and Ethiopia for deliverance from Assyria; Isaiah's demonstration was meant to show that the Israelites' faith was misplaced. Just as Isaiah walked around naked and barefoot, so the Egyptians and Ethiopians would be led captive to Assyria naked and barefooted.

Isaiah 20:1 situates this episode c. 711 B.C.E., when Sargon of Assyria conquered the city of Ashdod, which had rebelled by refusing to pay tribute to Assyria.

À la Carte: A Broad Approach to Exodus Research

Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective: Text, Archaeology, Culture and Geoscience

Edited by Thomas E. Levy, Thomas Schneider and William H.C. Propp

(Cham: Springer, 2015), 584 pp., $129 (hardback)

Reviewed by Judith M. Hadley

AS ITS SUBTITLE SUGGESTS, THIS book examines many issues concerning the Exodus from a variety of multidisciplinary perspectives. It consists of 43 essays, each by a different author or group of authors. Many of the names of the 60 contributors will be familiar to **BAR** readers—Manfred Bietak, William Dever, Israel Finkelstein, Lawrence Geraty, Baruch Halpern, James Hoffmeier, Thomas Levy, Nadav Na'aman and William Propp, to name a few.

The articles are based on papers presented at an interdisciplinary conference at the University of California, San Diego, in 2013 by an international group of scholars and experts in diverse fields, who were addressing their peers. When referencing ancient texts, these experts frequently use the original languages in the relevant scripts (e.g., in the Hebrew alphabet); sometimes they include a transliteration, but often they do not even provide an English translation of the text. As the book contains a lot of technical language and analysis, probably only a third of the articles would be of interest to most **BAR** readers.

The scholars include archaeologists, Egyptologists, Biblical scholars, computer scientists, geoscientists and other experts. Topics include the historicity of the Exodus, Egyptian and Near Eastern parallels to the Exodus story, archaeological fieldwork on emergent Israel, the formation of Biblical literature, the cultural memory of the Exodus in ancient Israel and ancient topography—among others. Due to the wide scope of offerings, the articles are arranged in nine parts.

Each article begins with a brief abstract, and most of the articles are extensively referenced, with lengthy bibliographies. The perspectives are as varied as the scholars themselves, with some on the conservative side, others more critical and some very scientifically detailed. For example, an article on the technical side—"Inspired by a Tsunami?"—has a section on tsunami modeling with wave propagation/flow simulation that sets out a series of mathematical equations used to create computerized tsunami models in an attempt to explain possible tsunamis and their effects in ancient times.

For anyone interested in an in-depth analysis of the Exodus from varied scientific positions and religious approaches, this could be a valuable book. For the non-specialist, its value would be more limited, but this is where the abstracts (summaries) could be useful. While not generally giving away the conclusions of the articles, the abstracts are easily accessible to a wider audience, as they lack the detailed analysis and more technical language used in the articles themselves. Additionally, about half of the articles have a clearly marked conclusion, which usually is helpful in explaining the gist of the article.

All in all, this is a thorough, stimulating and up-to-date volume.

Judith M. Hadley is Associate Professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. She is an archaeologist, Biblical scholar and author of The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah: Evidence for a Hebrew Goddess *(Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000).*

First Person

continued from page 6

of Bichri, the leader of a rebellion against David's throne. The inhabitants of the city turned on Sheba, however, cut off his head and threw it out to Joab so he would leave the city unharmed.

Two seasons of excavation were conducted in 2013 and 2014, and the team led by Nava and Robert hope to focus future seasons on looking for tenth–ninth centuries B.C.E. levels, a controversial period, as some claim the region was uninhabited during that time.

Abel Beth Maacah's location as a border site provides a unique opportunity to study interactions between the Israelites, Arameans and Phoenicians. The excavations funded through **BAR**'s grant hopefully will help shed light on the relationship of Abel Beth Maacah to its neighbors and highlight whether the region was occupied during David's time.

Steven Notley and Mordechai Aviam intend to use their $20,000 to support their excavation at el-Araj, a site on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. el-Araj is but one contender—the other being et-Tell, excavated by Rami Arav and his team—for the Biblical site of Bethsaida.*

Bethsaida is mentioned in the Gospels more often than any city except Jerusalem and Capernaum, yet the site has been lost to history. Bethsaida is referenced as the site of three of Jesus' miracles—the feeding of the 5,000 (Luke 9:12–17), walking on water (Mark 6:45–51) and curing a blind man (Mark 8:22–25)—and the home of the disciples Philip, Andrew and Peter (John 1:44).

Mordechai (Motti) and Steven (Steve) intend to lead three seasons of excavations at the site of el-Araj, perhaps uncovering evidence that the site is Biblical Bethsaida. In any event, they

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*Rami Arav, Richard A. Freund and John F. Shroder, Jr., "Bethsaida Rediscovered," **BAR**, January/February 2000.

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hope to find the remains of a Second Temple Jewish fishing village—or even of a Jewish presence. A shovel-test—a method of archaeology survey that involves a series of test holes intended to determine if there are any cultural remains not visible on the surface—has uncovered several pieces of late Hellenistic and Roman pottery sherds. Oil lamps and a "heart-shaped" pillar (in profile) have been unearthed in previous surveys.

With the grant money provided by **BAR**, Yonatan Adler plans to subsidize the cost for about 20 students to excavate his site at 'Einot Amitai, a subterranean cave located just south of Kafr Kanna in the Galilee.* 'Einot Amitai is not mentioned in the Bible, but it does have a Biblical connection—it served as a production center for chalkstone vessels. In John 2:6 when Jesus transforms water into wine at the wedding at Cana, the water was held within six stone jars "for the Jewish rites of purification." Stone vessels are well-known in Jewish law because they are not subject to impurity and therefore were widely used by Jews at this time. 'Einot Amitai is the only known chalkstone vessel production site located in the Galilee. 'Einot Amitai is located a little more than a mile from Cana, so it's fair to assume that the vessels mentioned in the Gospel of John came from there.

Yonatan intends to address the issue of Jewish purification rites by excavating at 'Einot Amitai. According to the purity laws of Leviticus 11, if any unclean animal should touch an earthenware vessel (pottery), all of the vessel is considered unclean and must be broken. Stone, however, was considered immune to impurity and thus could be used again if it came into contact with something unpure and was cleaned. Yonatan hopes that by studying stone vessel production at 'Einot Amitai, he can learn more about the production of stone items.—**H.S.**

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*Tom McCollough, "Searching for Cana: Where Jesus Turned Water into Wine," **BAR**, November/December 2015.

Land of Sheba

continued from page 36

them administrative positions at court. When the king died, the queen asked the two brothers to share with her the role of regent until the king's son would come of age. Frumentius made use of his authority to aid the local Christian community and to encourage Christians to settle in the realm. When the new king came of age, the two brothers decided to return to Phoenicia. Aedesius returned directly, but Frumentius went to Alexandria, where he beseeched the patriarch Athanasius to appoint a bishop for the newly established Christian community in Aksum. Athanasius was so impressed with Frumentius's accomplishments that he appointed him bishop and sent him back to the land from which he had just come.

Archaeological evidence indicates that by the sixth century a substantial portion of the population of the heartland of the

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Kingdom of Aksum had converted to Christianity. All the excavated Aksumite churches date to the sixth century or later. And, especially significant, crosses begin to appear on pottery, which is often made by local craftsmen and designed to fit the taste of the general population—unlike coins, which were designed by the authorities and displayed official propaganda.

Finally, in the sixth century, the Aksumite kingdom waged a religious war on the Kingdom of Himyar (Yemen) in the name of Christianity; from the fourth century C.E., a substantial portion of the Himyarite population, as well as Himyarite rulers, had abandoned their old polytheistic faith and embraced Judaism.[14] The Aksumites, around the early sixth century, managed to take control of parts of Himyar and advanced the Christian religion there. When the Jewish Himyarite king Yusuf (Joseph) As'ar Yath'ar, known in the popular tradition as Dhu Nuwas, attempted to regain full Himyarite independence, he waged war against the Aksumite soldiers stationed in Himyar and killed many Christians in his realm. This infuriated several leaders in the Christian world and served as the official reason for the campaign waged against Himyar in 525 C.E. by the Aksumite king Caleb. Supported by a Byzantine fleet, Caleb conquered Himyar and spread the Christian religion throughout the Himyarite realm.

With the advent of Christianity in the Aksumite kingdom, several elements of pre-existing culture were given a new, Christian form. Pre-Christian cultic sites became Christian monasteries.[15] The architectural qualities of Aksumite palaces, replicated in relief on Aksumite royal stelae, became typical features of Aksumite churches.[16] Funerary cult, the central form of cult in pre-Christian times, was given Christian form, as is attested by a number of Aksumite funerary churches, as well as funerary churches built in the centuries immediately following the fall of the Aksumite kingdom.[17] And monumental thrones, erected in honor of the aid of the gods in military victories, continued to be erected in Christian times, this time in honor of God.[18]

What of the special connection with South Arabia that the Aksumites advertised and maintained? This connection might also have received a Christian form. As the Kingdom of Saba is known in the Bible as the Kingdom of Sheba, the claim that the Aksumite kings were also kings of Saba would naturally lead to the claim that they were kings of Sheba. The affinity of the Aksumite kingdom with South Arabia, which was advertised by the elite and might have been a cornerstone of Late Antique Ethiopian identity, may have been a step in the process of identification of Ethiopia with the Kingdom of Sheba itself. Thus, it would lead, by means of the Biblical story of the meeting between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, to the development of the *Kebra Nagast* narrative as we know it today.

Therefore, while Yemen can rightfully claim to be the place of the historical Kingdom of Sheba, Ethiopian culture and Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity can rightfully claim to be based on the Biblical heritage of this kingdom. And this heritage has had a major impact on Ethiopian Orthodox religion and identity. As such, perhaps the Ethiopian claim can be seen as no less substantial than the Yemenite one.

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[1] See Stuart C. Munro-Hay, *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2006); Irfan Shahid, "The Kebra Nagast in the Light of Recent Research," *Le Muséon* 89 (1976), pp. 133–178.

[2] Jacques Faitlovitch, *Journey to the Falasha* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1959), pp. 111–112 (Hebrew).

[3] See Alessandro Bausi and Alessandro Gori, *Tradizioni orientali del "Martirio di Areta": la prima recensione araba e la versione etiopica, edizione critica e traduzione. A cura di Alessandro Bausi e Alessandro Gori, presentazione di Paolo Marrasini*, Quaderni di semitistica 27 (Florence: Dipartimento di linguistica, Università di Firenze, 2006), pp. 118–119.

[4] See Iris Gerlach, "Yeha: An Ethio-Sabaean Site in the Highlands of Tigray (Ethiopia)," in Alexander Sedov, ed., *New Research in Archaeology and Epigraphy of South Arabia and Its Neighbors. Proceedings of the "Rencontres Sabéennes 15" Held in Moscow, May 25th–27th, 2011* (Moscow: State Museum of Oriental Art, 2012), pp. 215–240; Pawel Wolf and Ulrike Nowotnick, "The Almaqah Temple of Meqaber Ga'ewa Near Wuqro (Tigray, Ethiopia)," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 40 (2010), pp. 367–380.

[5] Etienne Bernand, Abraham J. Drewes and Roger Schneider, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite,* vol. 1 (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1991–2000), pp. 72–73, 79–80. It has been suggested that the mention of Saba in these inscriptions refers to Sabaeans living in Ethiopia. See Christian Robin and Alessandro de Maigret, "Le grand temple de Yéha (Tigray, Éthiopie) après la première champagne de fouilles de la mission française (1998)," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 142 (1998), pp. 791, 793.

[6] See Robin and de Maigret, "Le grand temple de Yéha," pp. 789–794.

[7] Rodolfo Fattovich, "The Development of Ancient States in the Northern Horn of Africa, c. 3000 B.C.–A.D. 1000: An Archaeological Outline," *Journal of World Prehistory* 23 (2010), pp. 163–165.

[8] Fattovich, "The Development of Ancient States," pp. 154–155, 157–158.

[9] Two structures that have been identified as Aksumite temples have been discovered: one at Ushate Golo and one at Mekayiho. See Henri de Contenson, "Les fouilles à Ouchatei Golo, près d'Axoum, en 1958 (1957–1959)," *Annales d'Éthiopie* 4 (1961), pp. 3–14; Rodolfo Fattovich, Andrea Manzo and Luisa Sernicola, "Report of the October–November 2008 Field Season of the Italian Archaeological Expedition at Aksum of the University of Naples l'Orientale," (*forthcoming*). An Aksumite inscription possibly mentioning a temple has been discovered at Abba Pantalewon Monastery. See Gian Paolo Chiari, *A Guide to Aksum and Yeha* (Addis Ababa: Arada Books, 2009), pp. 168–169. However, even if some of these sites functioned as temples, they are all in the periphery of the city of Aksum and cannot be compared in terms of their monumental presence to the funerary stelae.

[10] Stuart C. Munro-Hay, *Aksum: An African Civilization of Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 222–232.

[11] Stuart C. Munro-Hay and Bent Juel-Jensen, *Aksumite Coinage* (London: Spink & Son Ltd., 1995), pp. 122–139, Types 35–49.

[12] Munro-Hay, *Aksum*, pp. 224–229.

[13] Philip R. Amidon, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia. Books 10 and 11* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), pp. x, 18–20 (Book 10.9–10.10).

[14] There is controversy regarding the nature of the Judaism practiced by the Himyarites. See Glen W. Bowersock, *The Throne of Adulis. Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013), pp. 83–85; Paul Yule, *Himyar. Late Antique Yemen* (Aichwald: Linden Soft, 2007), pp. 88–102.

[15] See Chiari, *A Guide to Aksum and Yeha*, pp. 167–173, 241–249; David W. Phillipson, *Ancient Churches of Ethiopia: Fourth–Fourteenth Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press), pp. 32–37, 42.

[16] Phillipson, *Ancient Churches of Ethiopia*, p. 195.

[17] Phillipson, *Ancient Churches of Ethiopia*, pp. 40–42, 46–47, 88–94.

[18] Munro-Hay, *Aksum*, pp. 227–229, 231–232; David W. Phillipson, *Foundations of an African Civilisation. Aksum and the Northern Horn 1000 B.C.–A.D. 1300* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 2012), pp. 132–137.

Biblical Views

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could be returned intact (b. *Baba Mezi'a* 42b; m. *Baba Batra* 4:8.) In fact they ruled that burying the deposit meant the trustee was not liable if a loss occurred. Though the Lukan slave ties the money in a cloth—thus taking what the Mishnah specifies as the riskier course—he nonetheless preserves the pound as any honorable man would. He does not participate in the scheme to double the master's money, but honorably refrains from taking anything that belongs to the share of another.

In both versions of the story, the third slave is told he should have invested the money with bankers so the master could have at least earned interest on his money. But seeking interest from another Israelite was forbidden by the Torah (Deuteronomy 23:19–20), and, elsewhere in Luke, Jesus says that we should lend "expecting nothing in return" (Luke 6:35). Even more telling is a third version of this parable quoted by Eusebius (265–339 C.E.) from the now-lost *Gospel of the Nazoreans*. There Eusebius is quite explicit that *the hero of the story is the third slave* who refused to cooperate in the investment schemes of the greedy master (*Theophania* 22).

What causes cross-cultural miscommunication is the unwarranted assumption that people from other cultures think like we do. But they don't. So when we read this story (and so many others in the Bible) through Western eyes, we miss completely what it once said to people in the ancient Mediterranean world. Perhaps it might have been possible for Western readers to see this master's rapacious behavior for what it really is had we not been so eager to discover our own cultural values affirmed in the sacred text.

Richard L. Rohrbaugh is the Paul S. Wright Professor of Religious Studies Emeritus at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon.

[1] J.D.M. Derrett, *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), p. 24.

Archaeological Views

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Thus every item on the site is linked to its original contributor, and intellectual property is maintained.

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Is the LCP working? The numbers are encouraging. We launched LCP 1.0 in January 2013; by March of that year, 55 contributors had submitted data to the site. Two years later, in January 2015, we introduced LCP 3.0, with a revamped submission process, new user interface, new systems for processing references and lots of other improvements. By June 2016 the site had 189 contributors, 270 ceramic wares, over 5,000 individual vessels and 45 petro-fabrics. Of course the amount of ceramic information on the LCP is infinitesimal compared to the staggering amounts of pottery that have been published since William Flinders Petrie first went to Egypt in 1884. Then again, the LCP has been in operation only since 2013. Working together, we can create a resource for the next century of exploration.

Andrea Berlin holds the James R. Wiseman Chair of Classical Archaeology at Boston University. Her current research focuses on the administrative compound at Tel Kedesh in northern Israel, as well as life at Sardis in western Turkey during the Hellenistic period. She is founder of the Levantine Ceramics Project.

Biblical Hebrew

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[2] Frederick H. Cryer, "The Problem of Dating Biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew of Daniel," in Knud Jeppesen, Kirsten Nielsen and Bent Rosendal, eds., *In the Last Days: On Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic and Its Period (Festschrift Benedikt Otzen)* (Aarhus: Aarhus Univ. Press, 1994), p. 192.

[3] For diachronic studies dealing specifically with Late Biblical Hebrew, see Aaron D. Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah: The Case for a Sixth-Century Date of Composition* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014); Avi Hurvitz, "Biblical Hebrew, Late," in Geoffrey Khan, ed., *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, vol. 1 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 329–338; Avi Hurvitz, *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014); Eduard Y. Kutscher, "Biblical Hebrew," in Raphael Kutscher, ed., *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), pp. 12–86; Robert Polzin, *Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for the Harvard Semitic Museum, 1976); Mark F. Rooker, "Recent Trends in the Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew," in Ethan C. Jones, ed., *Essays in Honor of George L. Klein* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming); Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 112–160.

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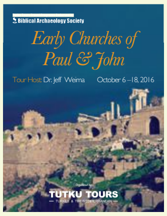
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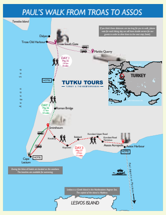
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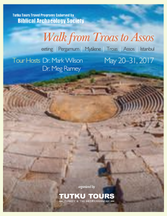
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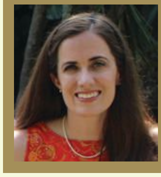

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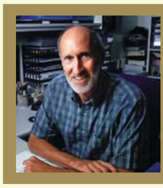

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Babylonian Exile

continued from page 54

[2] A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), p. 102.

[3] E. Weidner, "Jojachin, König von Juda, in babylonischen Keilschrifttexten," in *Mélanges syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud* (Paris: Paul Geunther, 1939), pp. 923–935.

[4] David Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 59; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), pp. 149-152.

[5] Now housed in the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, the Museum of the Ancient Orient at the Istanbul Archaeological Museums in Istanbul, the Frau Professor Hilprecht Collection of Babylonian Antiquities at the University of Jena in Germany, The Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the British Museum, London.

[6] F. Joannès and A. Lemaire, "Trois tablettes cunéiformes à l'onomastique ouest-sémitique," *Transeuphratène* 17 (1999), pp. 17–34.

[7] Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents*, p. 28; Cornelia Wunsch, with collaboration of Laurie Pearce, *Judeans by the Waters of Babylon. New Historical Evidence in Cuneiform Sources from Rural Babylonia in the Schøyen Collection*, Babylonische Archive 6 (Dresden: ISLET, forthcoming).

[8] Pearce & Wunsch, *Documents*, p. 28; Wunsch, *Judeans*.

[9] R. Zadok, "The Nippur Region During the Late Assyrian, Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods Chiefly According to Written Sources," *Israel Oriental Studies* 8 (1978); I. Eph'al, "The Western Minorities in Babylonia in the 6th–5th Centuries B.C.: Maintenance and Cohesion," *Orientalia* 47 (1978), pp. 74–90.

[10] There is no cuneiform evidence of such a proclamation in the reign of Cyrus or of any other Achaemenid king. Claims that the Cyrus Cylinder [BM 90920+NBC 2504] does so are unfounded. As a typical building inscription, the barrel-shaped document touts the work authorized by Cyrus for the restoration of ancient shrines in the eastern and northern regions of Mesopotamia. For a recent translation, and a discussion of the place of the Cyrus Cylinder in the historiographic program of the Achaemenid empire, see P. Michalowski, "The Cyrus Cylinder," in M. Chavalas, ed., *Historical Sources in Translation: The Ancient Near East* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 426–430. For an important, earlier study on the programmatic nature of the cylinder, see A. Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25 (1983), pp. 83–97.

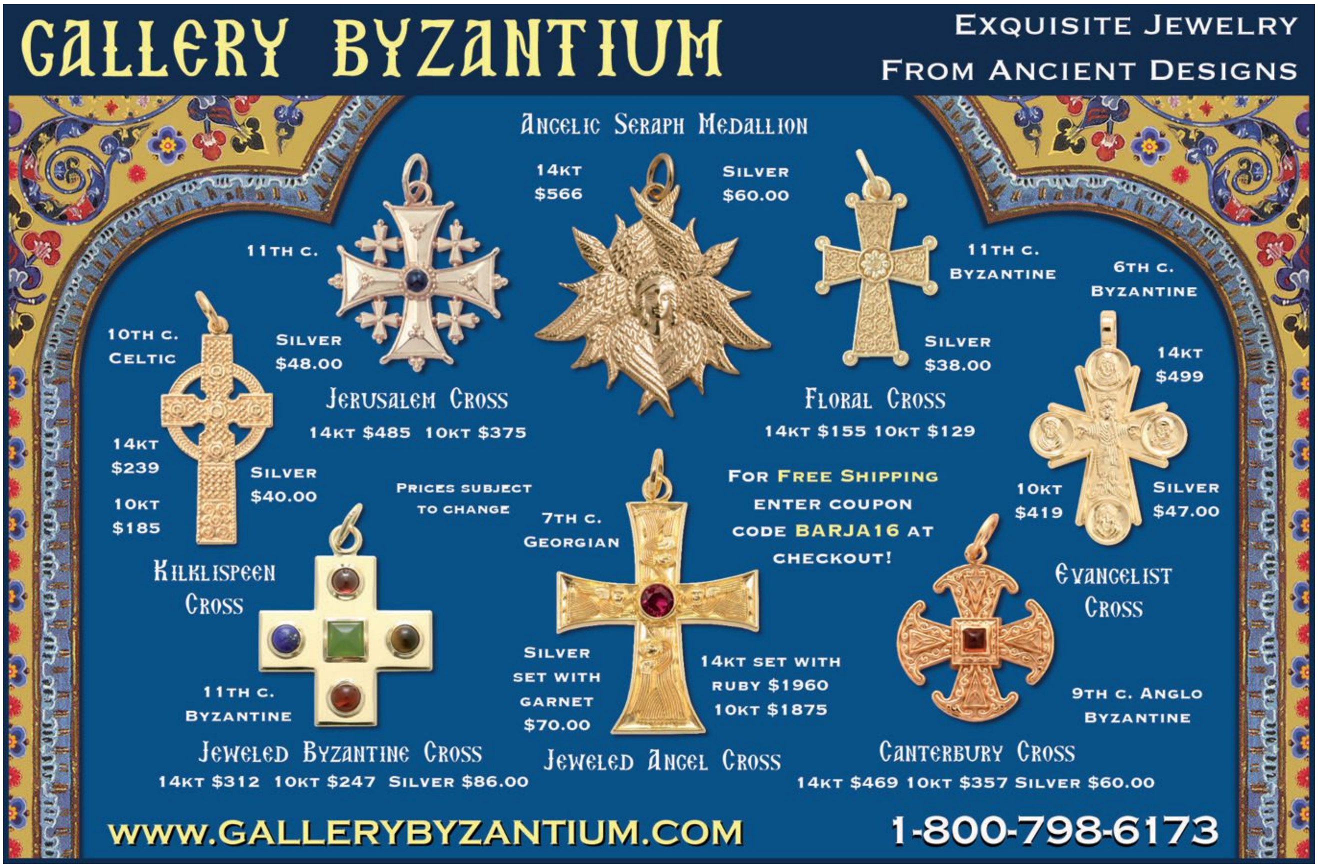
Lost Gospels

continued from page 47

repurposed and expanded as the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. Both Nicodemus and Pseudo-Matthew were widely copied in the West, and elements of their stories appear in art, literature and theater throughout the medieval period.

Not everyone in the churches valued the new texts, and certainly none of them was esteemed highly enough to become canonical, but they demonstrate that even after the formation of the canon, writers within the church were willing to create apocryphal texts—in effect, to create forgeries—when it suited their needs.

Third, if the churches were willing to write apocrypha and sometimes incorporate them in their liturgies, then it can hardly be true that they were vigorous in their efforts to suppress apocryphal texts, even particularly heretical texts. Recent re-evaluations of the story of the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discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library suggest that the codices were not hidden in order to safeguard them from confiscation after all.[10] The Bedouin who found the codices claimed to have discovered them in a large jar while digging for fertilizer, but there is good reason to believe they invented the story as a cover for grave robbery. Like the Akhmîm Codex, and the Berlin and Tchacos codices, the Nag Hammadi Codices were probably buried with the monks or collectors who valued them; likely they read (or heard) the standard texts of the Bible, just as everyone else, but saw something of value also in these non-canonical texts despite the occasional call for their destruction.

The canon of the New Testament has not been stagnant, as demonstrated by the Christian apocrypha. Whether a text is canonical or non-canonical has not always been clear, and the so-called "lost" texts were not lost to all. We are also aware that the modern interest in Christian apocrypha, occasioned in part by the attention paid to Dan Brown's 2004 novel *The Da Vinci Code*, is far from new; Christians today read texts outside of the canon for the same reasons as their forebears: because the New Testament does not satisfy their needs for knowledge about the origins of Christianity nor for answers to all of their metaphysical and theological questions. The notion that "lost gospels" have been rediscovered makes for fascinating reading, but the history of the composition and transmission of the Christian apocrypha is far more complex than is usually told. Far from lost, these texts have always been with us and will be there whenever they are needed.

---

[1] For an accessible collection of the early (first–fourth-century) texts discussed in this article, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books That Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003). Late-antique and medieval apocrypha receive far less attention, but the forthcoming collection edited by Tony Burke and Brent Landau (*New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans]) is a step toward remedying this problem. For a comprehensive overview of the primary and secondary

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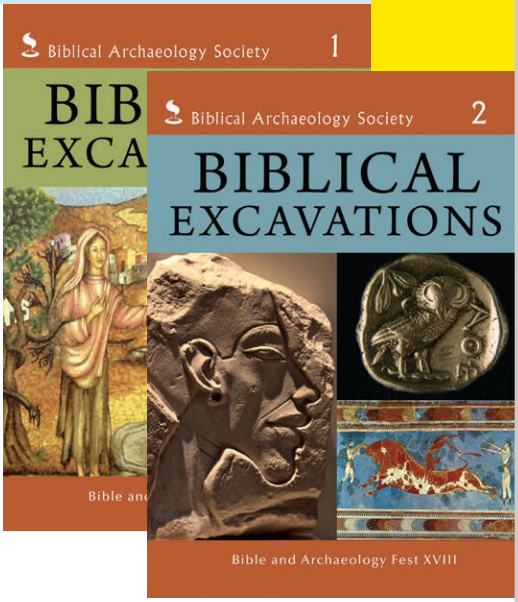
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literature, see the two volumes by Hans-Josef Klauck (*Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction*, Brian McNeil, trans. [London and New York: T&T Clark, 2003] and *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction*, Brian McNeil, trans. [Waco, TX: Baylor Univ. Press, 2008]) or the shorter treatment by Tony Burke (*Secret Scriptures Revealed: A New Introduction to the Christian Apocrypha* [London: SPCK and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013]).

[2] For further details about the formation of the canon, as well as challenges to the notion of the settling of the canon in the fourth century, see the work of Lee Martin McDonald, including *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority*, 3rd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007) and *The Formation of the Bible: The Story of the Church's Canon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012).

[3] The Oxyrhynchus and other early apocrypha manuscripts are available, with photographs, in Thomas A. Wayment, *The Text of the New Testament Apocrypha (100–400 C.E.)* (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[4] See James Robinson, *The Story of the Bodmer Papyri* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011).

[5] Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) was an early and prominent voice in this discussion.

[6] This re-evaluation has been brought to wider attention lately by Philip Jenkins in *The Many Faces of Christ: The Thousand-Year Story of the Survival and Influence of the Lost Gospels* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

[7] Paul C. Dilley examines this phenomenon particularly for the Western church in "The Invention of Christian Tradition: 'Apocrypha,' Imperial Policy, and Anti-Jewish Propaganda," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 50 (2010), pp. 586–615. Interest in this area of study has led to the creation of a new series from Penn State University Press called *Inventing Christianity*, edited by L. Stephanie Cobb and David L. Eastman.

[8] These two texts will appear in Burke and Landau, *New Testament Apocrypha*.

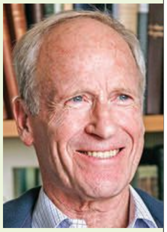
[9] Alin Suciu has become an expert on this literature. His Ph.D. dissertation, *Apocryphon Berolinense/Argentoratense (Previously Known as the Gospel of the Savior). Reedition of P. Berol. 22220, Strasbourg Copte 5–7 and Qasr el-Wizz Codex ff. 12v–17r with Introduction and Commentary* (Université Laval, 2013), includes a comprehensive survey of all the pseudo-apostolic memoirs (see pp. 75–91). The thesis will soon be published in E.J. Brill's series Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae.

[10] See Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine Ariel Blount, "Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133 (2014), pp. 399–419 and Mark Goodacre, "How Reliable Is the Story of the Nag Hammadi Discovery?" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 35 (2013), pp. 303–322.

AUTHORS

Kribus

Bar Kribus ("Where Is the Land of Sheba—Arabia or Africa?" p. 26) is pursuing his doctorate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on the topic of the monastic movement of the Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews). He has been a staff member of the Hebrew University excavations in Tiberias and the Naples University l'Orientale excavations in Seglamien (near Axum, Ethiopia).


Hurvitz

Avi Hurvitz ("How Biblical Hebrew Changed," p. 37) is a professor emeritus in the Bible and Hebrew Language Departments of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His most recent work is *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period* (2014).

Burke

Tony Burke ("'Lost Gospels'—Lost No More," p. 41) is an associate professor in the Department of the Humanities at York University in Toronto, Canada, and the author of *Secret Scriptures Revealed: A New Introduction to the Christian Apocrypha* (London: SPCK, 2013). Burke's research interests include the study of Christian biographical literature of the second century (infancy gospels), children and the family in Roman antiquity, curses and non-canonical Jewish and Christian writings.

Pearce

Laurie E. Pearce ("How Bad Was the Babylonian Exile?" p. 48) is a lecturer in Assyriology in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2016 she held a Fulbright fellowship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her primary research interests are the social and economic history of Babylonia in the late first millennium B.C.E.

Q&C

continued from page 10

full of dishes waiting to be washed, and my health was even endangered as I was so wrapped up in the DVD that I forgot to catch my transportation to the grocery store.

I recently had my 86th birthday. Mr. Shanks, I believe we were born in the same year, 1930, which must have been a vintage year.

HERBERT H. BECKWITH
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Pastor Won't Renew

I am not renewing our church's subscription to **BAR**. We all want to go where true archaeology leads us and let the findings be what they are, but when people start sharing their opinions about the Bible without evidence, it becomes too much to take. What evidence proves that Eve was taken from Adam's penis ("Creating Woman," **BAR**, March/April 2016)? I have learned that you can always find someone somewhere who is willing to say, "This Hebrew word means this or that," without any proof!

REV. TOM BUTLER
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CORRECTION

Photo Credit

The photographs of the jug and silver hoard in Archaeological Views: "A Silver Lining at Abel Beth Maacah" (**BAR**, July/August 2016) should have been credited to archaeological photographer Gabi Laron. Additionally, Hazor is located 30 kilometers (18.6 mi) south of Abel Beth Maacah, not 30 miles.

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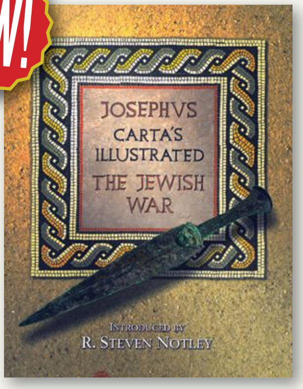
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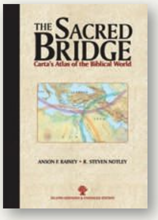
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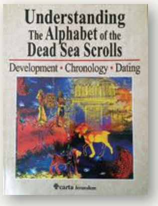
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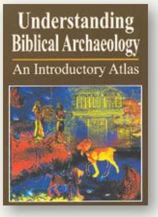
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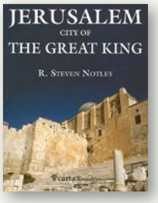
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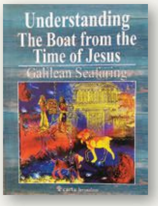
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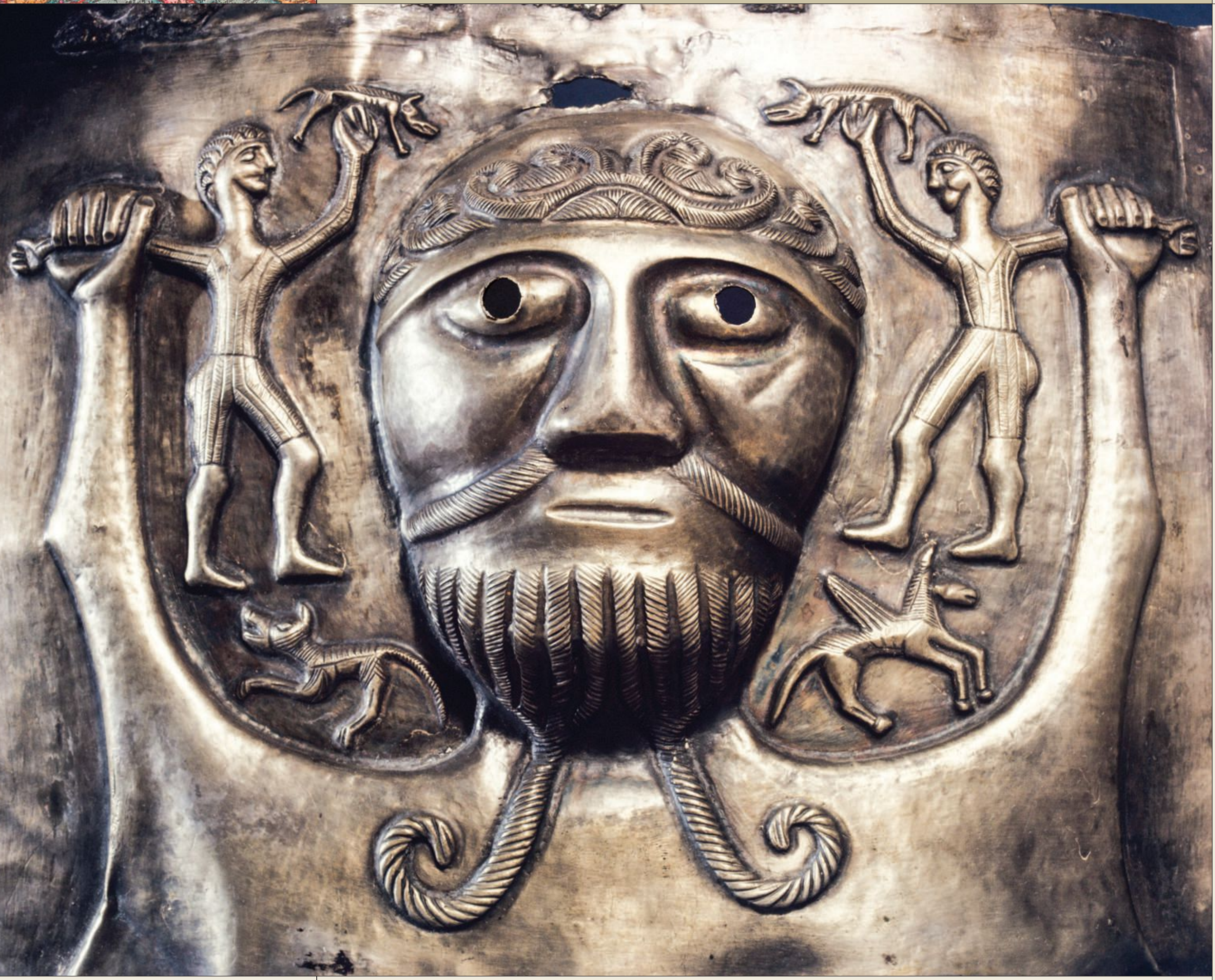

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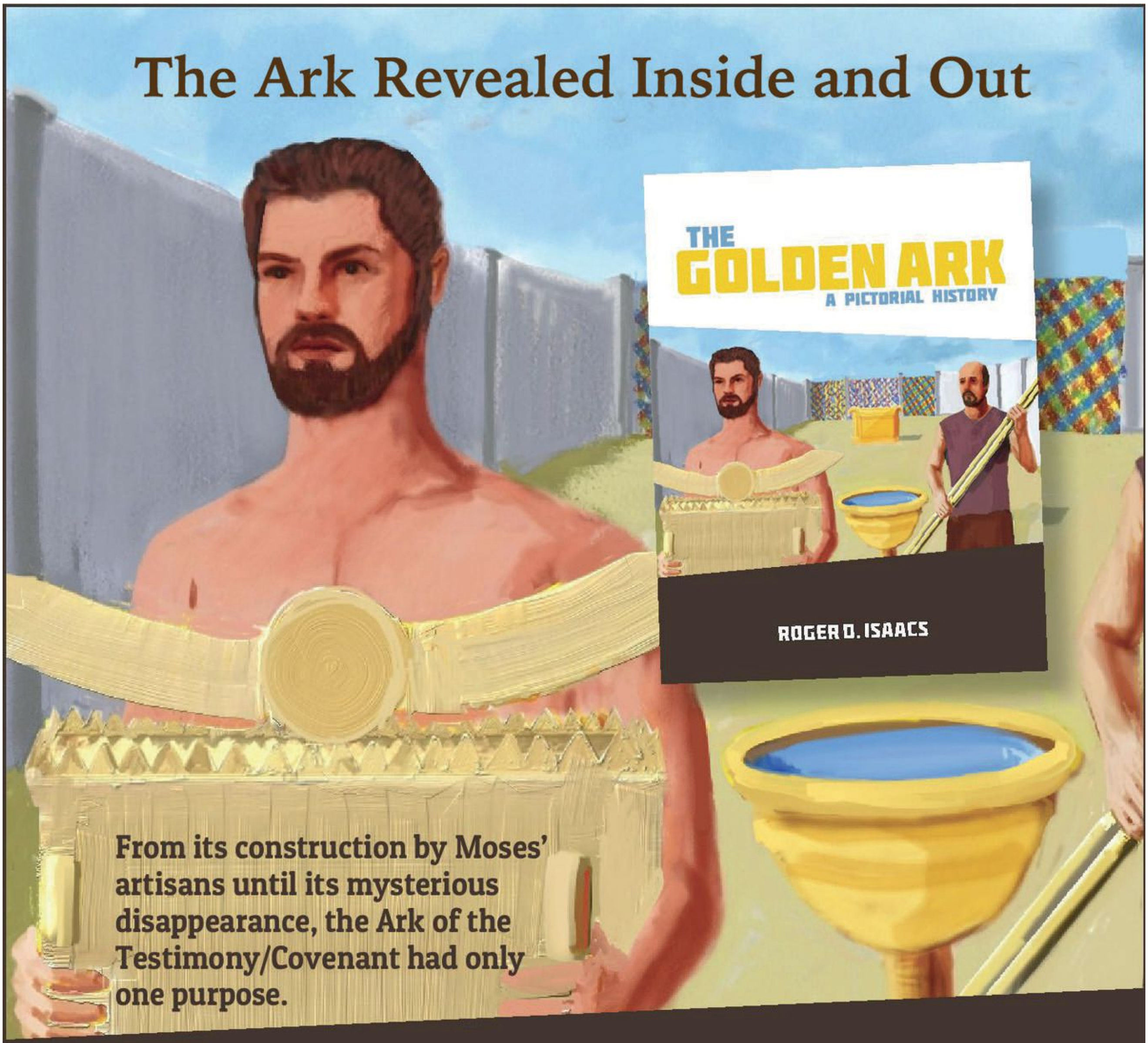
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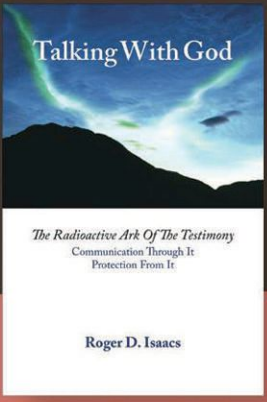
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